

#MIND&BODY

You're Doing Enough!

Here are some strategies to reduce self-criticism and feel more productive.



It's easy to criticize yourself for not getting enough done, but that can just make things worse. People who engage in self-criticism tend to be more depressed, which in turn tends to go along with lower productivity.

What's the alternative to living in the mental space of "I'm not doing enough"? Several strategies can reduce your self-judgment and increase your satisfaction about your accomplishments.

Different situations call for different approaches, of course. If you are grieving or enduring other intense emotional turmoil, it can help to view getting through the day as doing enough. Perhaps you struggle to get going or to focus on only one thing at a time. It may be a season of life when it feels right to do less in order to prioritize other ways of being or growing, or you might wish that you could do less but have considerable financial or caregiving constraints. On the other hand, you might feel eager to get more done, but also wary of a culture of productivity that a person's worth is based on work-related achievements.

Whatever your situation, some of the techniques suggested below may help you to instigate new mental perspectives, while others focus on adjusting your behaviours. Deliberately applying strategies to your own situation can boost your engagement in meaningful activities and quell your worries about not doing enough.

Spot The Success

Instead of a "to-do" list, try out a "done" list. Write down 10 things that you've done today that have helped your life, someone else, or the world. There is no item too small. Taking a vitamin or texting a friend can feel like nothing, but each action is beneficial and each action matters.

"Spot the success" is about appreciation, not evaluation. The goal isn't to assess how much you've done or how well you've done it, but rather to nourish gratitude for each positive action.

This technique is a form of cognitive reappraisal—that is, looking at the same situation in a different way—a skill linked to lower levels of depression. Instead of focusing on what you haven't done, you'll take a couple minutes to highlight what you have done.

Act Before You Feel Like It

Most people want to feel motivated to engage in specific ac-

tivities, such as exercise or writing. It might seem counterintuitive, but jumping right into an activity, even if you don't feel any motivation at all, often leads to feeling motivated.

This technique is called behavioural activation: engaging in planned activities that align with your goals and values, even if you don't feel like it in the moment. Behavioural activation is an effective treatment for depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (at least as effective as anti-depressant medication or cognitive therapy).

Chunking

Would you like your entire home to be much more organized? So would we all. However, professional organizers advise to start with just one drawer or a straightforward task such as clearing out expired food. They explain that identifying a small, manageable goal increases confidence, and makes it less likely that you will become overwhelmed and give up.

You can also "chunk" work, errands, or exercise goals into manageable units. It feels a lot better to tell yourself, "I completed three specific tasks!" than to carry around the sense that "I failed to complete my big task." One study found that chunking "macrotasks" into "microtasks" resulted in people doing higher-quality work, being more resilient to interruptions, and finding them easier than "macrotasks."

This Moment Matters

Talking out the garbage or replying to email can seem like annoying obstacles to more meaningful work. Or perhaps you feel guilty when spending time on hobbies or relaxing.

Can you experiment with really tuning into bodily sensations in the moment, to heighten your mental presence during each activity? You might attend more closely to the texture of the garbage bag or the pressure of your fingers as you type. You can remind yourself that the current activity is the only thing that you have to do or think about in this very moment.

Increasing mindfulness within daily activities can strengthen your sense of productivity. Mindfulness decreases rumination (including worrying about not doing enough). Because people who practice mindfulness tend to have clearer values and to be less judgmental, you may also find that you're less likely to judge yourself according to how much you've accomplished.

A young CRPF jawan is said to have spoken, "We carry our uniforms, bedding, family photos, battalion memories, gifts and almost our whole life in it wherever we go. It is like our identity." "Things have changed now, but the black steel trunk will always have a very special place in our memory. There was a time when a Jawan in the forces would live with and live for only three things - his Unit, his trunk and his rifle. Although many diverse trolley suitcases are fairly freely available in military canteens, the Jawans still prefer the cumbersome, black steel trunks which are hardy, commodious and utterly dependable. These trunks are a familiar and reassuring piece of luggage, directly associated with many generations of military people who literally lived out of them for their entire service span.

Ode to the Steel Trunk!



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#DEPENDABLES

spread a sheet on it. If you add a couple of cushions over the sheet, then the said box becomes a settee. With several more boxes of its kind put together and a mattress spread on top, it becomes a bed. This box has acted as a safe for all the important things in one's life. With double locks, in some cases even triple locks, it ensured that you were comfortable wherever your goods were in transit from one place to another.

Numbered Trunks

Trunks are not just memories; they would be frequently memorised as numbers. On all moves, the officer and/or his wife would maintain a diary of all items present in each of the numbered trunks so that it would be easier to open and organise in a new abode. Some items would always have the same number, so would end up being memorised. I am a 67-year-old veteran



fighter pilot of the Indian Air Force, but to this day, Box no. 1 means linen, Box no. 5 and 6 means kitchen items, and Box no. 14 and 15 meant my beloved books. Books were also used as padding in various other boxes. But Box no. 14 and 15 were so heavy, that it required two people to carry each.

We also had the "God Box", housing pictures and all the idols we had collected of various Gods for our little temple corner. S Fauji steel trunk is almost always a metal box, painted black, with the officer's name, rank and trunk number painted on it. It was a constant companion in our lives. Not just for shifting around our very vast country on postings so very regularly, but also in our homes. Imagine the horror and shock felt very recently by many millions of ex-Faujis, when they learnt that the Home Ministry has plans on replacing the ubiquitous, government-issued steel trunks provided to paramilitary personnel to transport their personal belongings on their many moves across the country, with "trolley propelled polycarbonate" suitcases.

According to recent reports, the Union Home Ministry has instituted a committee that includes the Bureau of Indian Standards, the Bureau of Police Research and Development, and most amazingly, also the Northern Textile Research Association amongst others, to design/suggest/propose a contemporary alternative to these omnipresent trunks. At times like these, when there are many grave internal and external security issues facing our country, it is incomprehensible that a high-level committee is in session spending hugely of the taxpayer's



money, to doom the black steel trunk to its Valhalla. This committee is presently framing specifications for these prospective substitutes by determining their weight, capaciousness, durability and cost, before procuring through tenders and issuing it to the troops in the Central Para Military Forces (CPMF). An official communication from the Union Home Ministry said, "During the discussions, various points were deliberated upon, including the use of three-way locking systems and zippers; use of material such as polypropylene/polycarbonate, the size and capacity, durability and warranty, flexibility, weight and cost viability." The Government is planning to replace these black steel trunks with trolley bags from brands like Samsonite and American Tourister, both of which are presently available in the military canteens.

The Gradual Phasing Out

A young CRPF jawan is said to have spoken, "We carry our uniforms, bedding, family photos, battalion memories, gifts and almost our whole life in it wherever we go. It is like our identity."

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In the event of any Jawan's death in the line of duty, the trademark trunk containing his belongings,

with a folded national flag atop the black steel trunk would be handed over to the family as part of a very long established and solemn tradition. The gradual phasing out of the steel trunk, however ungainly they may be, would be an emotional wrench to many thousands of combatants, both serving and veterans, as they have been fully synonymous with the Jawans for many decades.

The other piece of baggage that has almost already completely vanished is the "Bistrabund" or the "holdall" that almost always accompanied the black steel trunk on all the travels their master was commanded to do for the sake of his "Unit, Core, God and Country". This Bistrabund was roughly the size of an average bed when spread out.



panied the black steel trunk on all the travels their master was commanded to do for the sake of his "Unit, Core, God and Country". This Bistrabund was almost always made of very robust canvas, and roughly was the size of an average bed when spread out. These most amazing contraptions, particular only to South Asia, were just what the name suggests: a bed roll but with cavernous pouches on its two sides, secured by pyjama nads.

In these cavernous pouches, bric-a-brac could be packed in either of the two ends, and mounds of articles like pillows, shoes, pyjama suit, dressing gown and other parapher-

nal. These items of clothing were meant for the officer, and the lady was meant to sleep in her saree, to avoid her embarrassment of having to change dress in a four-berth compartment comprising several pairs of beady eyes.

The Joining Instructions Amazingly, some of these pouches also disgorged other items like a bottle of rum, two glasses and two bottles of water. Some pouches also gave out packets of poori-sabzi. Once packed, and always to full capacity, its two inside flaps were neatly laced up at the centre, and the entire bistra was carefully rolled up and buckled into place with two long perforated leather belts, rendering it a very composite package, with a thick leather handle for carrying. Once aboard the train, with the trunk safely ensconced under the bunk, or placed in the corridor for use as a seat, the opened holdall was transformed into a very comfortable bed, issuing forth all manner of comfortable items.

Having seen and read all the brouhaha of the Union Home Ministry over the death knell of the poor black trunk (I wonder what Balbir would have to say about this?), a breath of fresh air came from the Ministry of Defence. The Joining Instructions for the new, to-be-inducted boy and girl cadets of the National Defence Academy in January 2023, give them a list of clothing items they would be issued at "Government Expense"; and what they are to carry with them which would be bought at "Parents/Guardian Expense". In the second category of items is "Steel Box Black, length 40", height 11" and width 23". So, it seems the black steel trunk is going to live on (as yet!) in the military.

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World Radiography Day

In 1895 there was an incredible discovery made, one that would utterly change the way we looked at the human body, both literally and figuratively. On the back of this discovery, a million new technologies would be developed in the areas of medicine, security, and much more. The man who discovered all this? Wilhelm Röntgen, and as a result, he may just be one of the most important men in medical history. World Radiography Day celebrates his discovery and everything that's come from it.

#FOOD-TALK

World's Best Spicy Foods

While these dishes may not all be mop-your-brow hot, they are some of the most deliciously spiced foods around. Chiles do make a very strong showing in phaal curry, billed as one of the world's hottest curries.

When it comes to the world's best spicy dishes, we have some of the world's hottest peppers to thank, along with incredible layers of flavour and a long, spice-loving human history.

"Spicy food, or at least spiced foods, clearly predates the idea of countries and their cuisine by a very, very long time," says Indian author Saurav Dutt, who is writing a book about the spiciest foods on the Indian subcontinent.

"Every spicy ingredient has a wild ancestor," he says. "Ginger, horseradish, mustard, chilies and so on have predecessors which led to their domestication."

Hunter-gatherer groups historically made use of various wild ingredients to flavour their foods, Dutt says, and there are many ingredients all over the world that can lend a spicy taste to a dish or stand on their own.

Peppers – a headliner for heat – are rated on the Scoville Heat Units scale, which measures capsaicin and other active components of chile peppers. By that measure, the Carolina Reaper is among the hottest in the world, while habaneros, Scotch bonnets and bird's eye chilies drop down a few rungs on the mop-your-brow scale.

Redolent with ghost peppers, Scotch bonnets, serranos, chiltepin peppers, mouth-numbing Sichuan peppercorns and more, the following spicy dishes from around the world bring the heat in the most delicious way.

Egusi Soup, Nigeria
Ata rodo – Scotch bonnet pepper – brings the fire to Nigeria's famous spicy soup. Egusi is made by pounding the seeds from the egusi melon, an indigenous West African fruit that's related to the watermelon.

In addition to being protein-packed, the melon's seeds serve to thicken and add texture and flavour to the soup's mix of meat, seafood and leafy vegetables. Pounded yams are often served alongside this dish, helping to temper the scorch of the Scotch bonnets.

Piri-piri Chicken, Mozambique and Angola
The Portuguese introduced this spicy dish also known as peri-



Som Tam, Thailand

From north-eastern Thailand's spice-loving Isaan province, this fresh and fiery salad is a staple dish at Thai restaurants around the world and is also popular in neighbouring Laos.

Som tam turns to green (unripe) papaya for its main ingredient, which is usually julienned or shredded for the

salad. The papaya is then tossed with long beans or green beans and a mix of flavourful Asian essentials that include tamarind juice, dried shrimp, fish sauce and sugar cane paste, among other ingredients. Thai chiles, also called bird's eye chiles, give the salad its requisite kick.

peri chicken into Angola and Mozambique as far back as the 15th century when they mixed African chiles with European ingredients (piri-piri means "pepper pepper" in Swahili). And it's the perky red pepper of the same name that brings the spiciness to this complex, layered and delicious dish.

Piri-piri chicken's poultry cuts are marinated in chiles, olive oil, lemon, garlic and herbs such as basil and oregano for a fiery flavour that blends salty, sour and sweet. The dish is also popular in Namibia and South Africa, where it's often found on the menu in Portuguese restaurants.

Ayam Betutu, Indonesia
Popular on the Indonesian islands of Bali and Lombok, in particular, this whole chicken dish is stuffed with an intensely aromatic spice paste (betutu) that usually includes a mashup of fresh hot chile peppers, galangal (a root related to ginger), cardamoms, shallots, garlic, turmeric and shrimp paste, among other ingredients.

The chicken is then wrapped in banana leaves and steamed, bringing the aromatics out all the more and flavouring the chicken to the max. Best shared, ayam betutu is often presented at religious ceremonies in Bali, but you'll find it at restaurants specializing in it throughout the islands, too.

Considered the Thai equivalent of a sandwich or a burger, the dish is a mix of ground pork, spicy Thai chile peppers and holy basil and can be ordered as spicy as you like. Many locals believe it's best topped with a fried egg with a runny yolk.

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Pad KaPrao, Thailand

A go-to dish when you want something satisfying – but with kick – pad kaprao is a mealtime staple in Thailand, where you'll find it on offer at street-side stalls and restaurants everywhere from Bangkok to the islands.

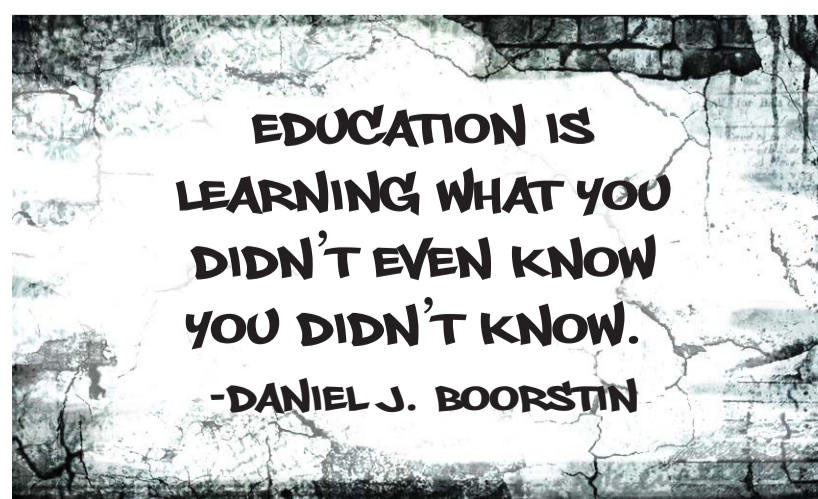
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Sichuan Hot Pot, China

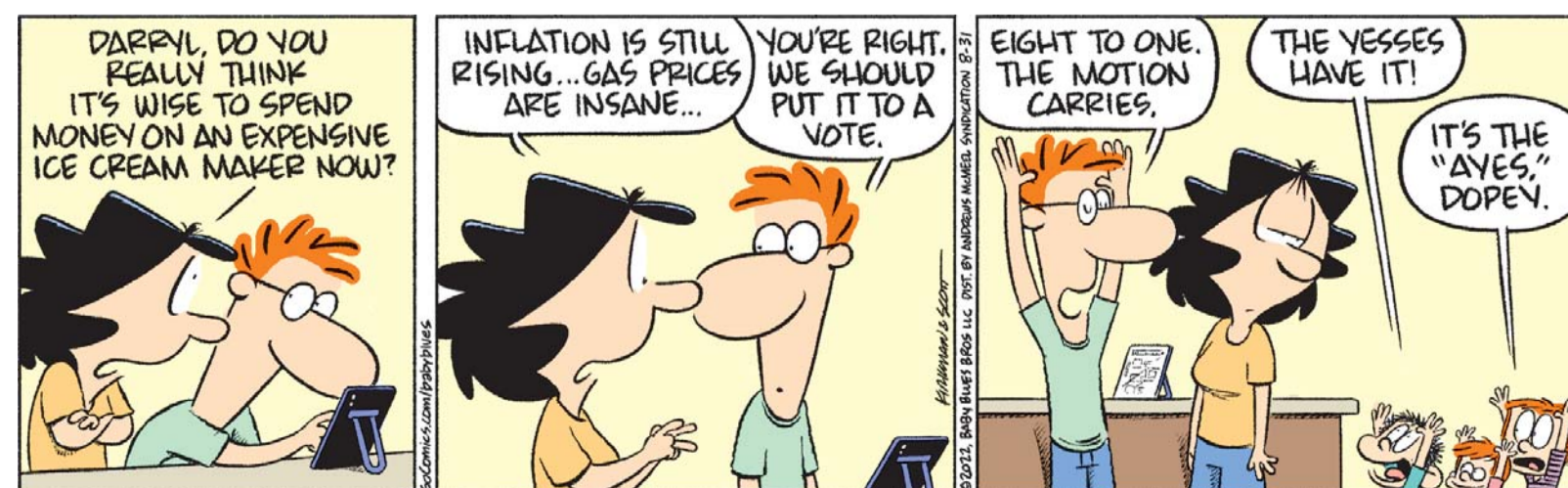
"The joy of this dish is not only the delightful warming ingredients of cinnamon, cloves, star anise and, of course, the Sichuan peppercorns, but that you can cook exactly what you like in the bubbling spicy broth," says British-born Chinese chef Kwoklyn Wan, author of "The Complete Chinese Takeout Cookbook." Also known as Chongqing hot pot, the dish is said to have originated as a popular food among Yangtze River boatmen. It's enjoyed by those who can handle its heat all over China, not to mention elsewhere around the world.



THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

