

Don't Procrastinate! Make YOU a Priority



Jeana Babcock

Have you ever put off going to the doctor? Have you ever tried ignoring symptoms, just hoping they would go away? Have you ever had a health condition that wasn't easily diagnosed? How long did it eventually take? Was the diagnosis what you expected? How did you cope with it?

In 2008 I was experiencing numbness and tingling in my extremities. Generally, I hadn't been feeling good for quite some time but I pushed through the symptoms and put them off. At the time, I was a stay at home mom with four kids ages 15, 8, 6, and 4, and we had just moved into a home that was built in the 70s and needed a lot of work (so long blue toilets!). I certainly had enough on my plate without dealing with a medical condition.

When I could no longer ignore the symptoms at the end of that summer, I finally sought help. After a few doctors and many tests I eventually had a diagnosis the day before Thanksgiving that year - Celiac Disease. It was discovered that my iron levels were extremely low and so were other vitamin/nutrient levels in my blood. The reason for these low levels was that the villi in my intestines were so damaged from exposure to gluten over the years, they were no longer absorbing the nutrients needed for a healthy body and nerves.

At that point, I was glad to have an answer and grateful that it wasn't a more severe diagnosis. However, I was still not happy with it. Celiac Disease comes with a life sentence of a very strict gluten-free diet. Did I mention that I learned this the day before Thanksgiving? Thanksgiving - the biggest gluten-filled day of the year! The yummy breads, delectable stuffing, the homemade pies - need I say more?

I'd like to tell you that I embraced my new diagnosis and was a star patient. But the truth is, I failed miserably! I think I ate more gluten that Thanksgiving day than ever before - a grand finale of gluten, if you will. Looking back, I was starting the process of grief. Friends, I was grieving the loss of gluten. Stage 1 was clearly denial.

The day after my gluttonous gluten feast, I began stage 2 - Anger. That stage lasted a while as I saw my family eating the things I could no longer have. Because GF foods were much more expensive twelve years ago, I was making two meals - one for my family and one for me. It seemed so unfair and it consumed my thoughts at times. In addition, I was ignorant about my new diet so my go to's were a few "safe" foods that I ate instead of what yummy meals I prepared for my family.

I think I skipped the bargaining phase of grief and went straight into depression. I stayed there for a while and had quite a few pity parties. Back in the early years of my diagnosis, every gluten substitute tasted like cardboard and most things had the texture of sand. I wish I were exaggerating - I am not. I ate sandy cardboard and I was not happy about it.

Then one day, as I was making golden crispy, amazing-smelling fried chicken for my family, while also making a greasy mess for myself, I finally had had it. I was not going to live my life grieving about losing gluten. How utterly ridiculous. God laid it on my heart to be thankful in all of my circumstances. But up to that point, I had been acting like a big baby. Just as I had put off going to the doctor, I had also put off living a full life. No more.

I put on my big girl pants, stopped grieving, and began my mission of learning a new way. I knew I did not want to eat sandy cardboard for the rest of my life. So I studied and educated myself, experimented, failed, experimented more, learned more, and ultimately persevered. Today, I can make just about anything just as good, if not better than gluten-filled baked goods and meals. Except for bread. I have not succeeded in making bread.

What have you missed out on by putting things off as I did? What consequences did you suffer because of your procrastination? What can you do today as a step toward overcoming fears of what might be or anger of what is? Might there be a better way? Perhaps a sunnier forecast of goodness if you take a step, stop having pity parties, and embrace reality?

As you can imagine, I work in a field that is perhaps the ultimate procrastination industry. Auto repair and maintenance. Let's look at this under the perspective of those questions, what I have witnessed over the years, and how auto service can be done better.

What have you missed or will you miss by putting off auto repair and maintenance? This question might just be in the midst of changing in the automotive world. Do you remember the toilet paper fiasco several weeks ago? Were you one of the hoarders or were you the person who discovered vacant shelves?

Due to quarantine, experts in the automotive industry are predicting a supply chain shortage due to the disruption of factory workers and manufacturers. This could create many problems for dealerships and independent shops in acquiring parts in the coming months ahead.

At Babcock Auto Care, we haven't yet experienced a problem sourcing parts but we have started to see a

delay in getting parts due to closures and shipping. We've also heard of problems with other shops across the nation procuring parts needed in a timely fashion. In light of this and "our new world", here are my thoughts:

#1) With vehicles, we really don't have the same potential TP situation since not everyone needs the same parts at the exact same time. However, if you need a repair that you have put off, I recommend taking care of the problem now before possible delays leave you without a vehicle for longer than desirable.

#2) Maintenance is key to keeping your vehicle healthy for as long as possible. Before the current state of affairs in our world, you may not have put maintenance at the top of your list if you are one who just trades your vehicle in when it gets older. However, are you now considering keeping your vehicle for longer? Maybe you are experiencing what many are during quarantine - what really matters. Perhaps driving a perfect car may no longer be at the top of your importance list and you are considering alternatives. If this is the case, or if you just want to have a healthy car and save money in the long run, I have great news! You can with maintenance. The truth is, many people don't understand "old" when it comes to cars. Dealerships want to get you to around 100K miles and then get you into a new or newer vehicle. 100K miles my friends, is the new 20! If you get regular maintenance - both with fluids and parts as recommended for vehicles that "live" in a climate that has extremes like SE Minnesota, your vehicle can perform very well and make it far past the 100K mark. My best case in point is our customer Mark, a man who is passionate about maintenance and who's Toyota "lived" to over 600K miles. Now, I am not saying 600K is typical, but I am saying that if you want to get your vehicle to a healthy ripe old age, saving you an incredible amount of money by not buying a new one so often, maintenance is what will get it there. Don't put it off.

What consequences have you suffered or might you suffer by putting off auto service? This is different for everyone. I have seen things like delaying a maintenance belt that was recommended many times but not done for one reason or another. Then when it breaks, it ends up costing much more time and money with the tow, new engine, etc.

I have heard people say they want to wait on fixing their brakes or other safety services and then getting in an accident. When it comes to making decisions based on safety, I wonder if people consider what the failure of parts may result in? It could potentially harm you, your family, and others on the roadways. My tip here, when making a decision about repairing a safety component, proceed as you would if you knew failing to do so would harm someone you love dearly. If you aren't willing to risk it, don't.

I could go on and on about how delays in service can become spendy and/or cause unsafe situations. Instead, imagine what the worst-case scenario consequences might be, whatever the service in question. Then, make the decision like this: If

someone you loved was driving that vehicle, how would you proceed? Do that. Someone loves you too.

Are there are steps you can take today and is there a better way, with a sunnier forecast? Of course, there are! The first thing I would recommend is to get real with yourself and come up with a plan. Mostly this getting real is about money. If you haven't already, start a car fund. Car funds aren't just about saving to buy a new car. Certainly, you can use it that way but that is not full-planning. Figure out how much your vehicle needs in maintenance each year. Also, consider the amount your vehicle might need in repairs. There are websites that can help your project this for your particular year, make, model vehicle. Divide that by the number of pay periods in a year for you and put it away with each check. It's kind of like a reverse credit card payment - instead of paying for repairs and maintenance after they happen - you already have the money, or at least some of the money to pay in real-time.

An additional "better way" with a sunnier forecast is to find a mechanic you trust. Then stay with them. Don't shop around. You do not know what you are going to get. I have heard horror stories with this and many things to consider.

Finding a mechanic you can trust has nothing to do with price. Well, maybe a little - they can't be priced out of the industry, of course. So this is huge. If all shops have to be priced comparably, there is almost always a reason why some are less than others. What is it? Horror stories I have heard involve shortcuts, inexperienced mechanics, the use of less quality parts, no warranty, delays, inconvenience, quoting low to "get the job" then higher pricing on other things that are found, etc.

My friends, auto service is about relationships, trust, and transparency. When you find a shop and stay there, they will have your vehicle's history with no guesswork, they will know and care about you - offering the best advice and help. They will want to grow that relationship and one cannot grow a relationship with dishonesty and price gouging. If you have questions, are dissatisfied with service, or even get a gut feeling something is off, have a conversation. Even if it's your first visit in trying to find your auto-home, the questions you ask might make all of the difference in the world in finding a shop you can trust and call home. Or maybe after your conversation you find they are not the right fit for you. In that case, be kind and tell them why. Every reputable shop wants to learn and get better. Everyone makes mistakes. In this life, we must do unto others as we would want to be done to us. We must offer grace.

Isn't this all a nice recipe for life? Be content in all your circumstances, don't procrastinate and offer all sorts of grace. If you live like this, and also have Celiac Disease or a gluten intolerance, your life is about to get richer. May is Celiac Awareness Month - I'll be sharing some tips I've learned over the last 12 years, recipes I've created or altered and free giveaways to some of my favorite restaurants.

If you are a healthy gluten eater - eat some bread for me! And there even some extra goodness for you in May. Besides the restaurant giveaways, we are celebrating local small businesses. Check out our blog or social media to find out how to nominate your favorites and enter to win gift card



507.226.8330

5335 Hwy. 52 North

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