

# BAD HABITS THAT WE ROMANTICISE

*No human being is perfect. We are all trying to do our best with the hands that we have been dealt. However, when people bond over their mistakes and failures a lot more than they do over their achievements, it plays havoc with their minds. Questionable habits become desirable, and self-restraint is thought of as boring. Someone needs to say it though, and so, throwing caution to the wind, here are a few bad habits that we tend to indulge in, and somehow end up justifying them to ourselves.*

## PROCRASTINATION

"Work smart and not hard" is an admirable philosophy, but hiding behind it to do neither is becoming a dangerous trend nowadays, bordering on an epidemic. How many times have you heard someone say, "I didn't study at all for this exam and still managed a C; if I had studied as much as \*insert name of class topper\* I would have probably aced it"? This statement is a problem on multiple counts. It falsely inflates one's sense of one's own abilities, undermines the hard work of others, and on top of it all, it makes working hard sound "un-cool". The question is not whether this person would have topped the exam if they had studied. The question is: why didn't they? Of course there are unavoidable circumstances that arise in people's lives. However, being guilty of it myself, I can confidently say that a majority of people avoid working while spending time on things that are absolutely worthless in the long run, mainly social media. Sometimes, we can't even recall what we did; we just know we didn't work.

Procrastination to the point where you only barely manage to send in completed work on time is one thing. Procrastination to the point where you send in sub-par work and that too after a deadline is problematic on both personal and organisational levels (Ferrari J.R., 1995). So the next time you hear someone say, "I haven't finished this assignment, played DOTA till 4a.m. last night," don't be the beloved friend who says, "Me too", be the annoying friend who says "You're too old to not have your act together like this. I did my work just fine, and my life didn't turn upside down. Surprised? So am I." You're helping your friend, and even yourself, a lot more this way.

## OVER-EATING

Dhaka's food scene has been expanding at a very rapid rate over the last decade. However, our entertainment industry has not managed to expand very much at all, and whatever it has expanded to has not been advertised as well as our food joints. This has led to all our time spent with friends and family revolving around food. We eat out all too frequently, and almost never do we pick the healthier options amongst those available. Then there are the festivals, when restaurants and their patrons take gluttony to the very extremes, and all-you-can-eat offers are abundant. However, eating all that we can is an awful habit that leads to a lot of health issues in the long run. Diseases of all kinds can be linked to one's appetite and eating habits. Furthermore, overeating has been identified to reach addictive stages at alarming rates because of its correlation to mental health disorders (Schwartz, Nickow, Arseneau, & Gisslow, 2015). So, maybe say no to dessert once in a while; or better yet, support the new businesses aiming to provide alternate forms of entertainment in this city. Just because there is a new burger joint right across the road from your place, it doesn't mean that you have to try it. Give up that compulsion. With food, just because you can, doesn't mean you should.

## PUTTING OFF GOING TO THE HOSPITAL

This one isn't our fault. It has been passed on to us through generations of parents avoiding doctors till it becomes a major issue. Nonchalance in the face of a disease is seen as a sign of strength, a mark of endurance. Thinking of ourselves as war heroes, we trod on with our daily activities, ignoring fevers and stomach aches, and boasting about our ability to withstand them once cured. This habit has a way of catching up to us though. It is 2018; we're smarter than this by now. Go to the doctors, get some medicine, listen to what your doctor tells you to do — it just might work.



## STAYING UP LATE FOR NO REASON

This goes hand in hand with procrastination. "I didn't do anything last night, but I still slept at dawn" is a frequently heard sentence. Scrolling mindlessly is a disease that needs to be acknowledged. The worst bit is: there's no end to it. Websites these days are designed to allow endless scrolling.

Staying up late has countless harmful effects on the body. From depression and weight gain to shorter life spans, it can have effects you never thought could be associated with just sleep (Lemola, Perkinson-Gloor, & Brand, 2015). Furthermore, it's not just sleep at any time of the day. Some people try to use the following piece of stellar logic in their defence: "I stay up late, but I wake up late too. So I basically get the same amount of sleep as

a person who sleeps and wakes up early". Unfortunately for these geniuses, that's not quite how the human body is designed. We are meant to sleep at night and in the dark. There are hormones that get released only in the unconscious hours that we spend in the dark, which help in repair and regeneration. That's why you feel more energised if you sleep a few hours at night, compared to sleeping long hours in the day. Fix that sleep cycle. It'll be tough, but ultimately worth it.

## SMOKING

Everyone on earth in possession of some level of awareness knows smoking is not a healthy habit. The consequences of smoking, from lung diseases to heart attacks, are well established and widely known. Top reasons for people beginning to smoke have been identified as attempting to look "cool" and peer pressure (Jarvis, 2004).

However, smoking is a lot more complicated than just picking up a bad habit pointlessly. As Jarvis elaborates in his study, smoking at an early age can be interpreted as an attempt to portray a more adult image of oneself, sometimes in order to compensate for failures in other aspects of life e.g. academic failures, misplaced blame for familial issues, etc. While for the other habits mentioned in this article, the solution is simply to stop, for smoking there exist a couple extra steps. This is because smoking is a symptom, not a disease. Unless you identify and cure the disease, the symptom is unlikely to disappear.

Peer pressure is another enormous factor when it comes to smoking. The idea that smoking together allows people to form deep connections with each other, in a way that can't be done without a cigarette in hand, is one that is still rampant. This ingrained concept is the root of peer pressure. It is what sows the fear of not fitting in into people's minds.

Once you begin smoking though, the entire situation shifts to revolve around the dependence. "It calms me down; takes away the stress," smokers say. What they don't realise is, they were already strong enough themselves to deal with any stress, if only they had not given that strength up willingly. And that is the crux of the matter when it comes to all of these habits.

At the end of the day, it's all about strength of mind and the willpower we have to control our actions. Every human is born with the power to control what they do. Exercising this power or relinquishing control to hide behind excuses is a choice, a conscious decision. Whether we believe that we have the strength to not make that decision and conquer the internal battle that forces us to consider such options as necessary, is entirely up to us.

## References

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Rabita Saleh is a perfectionist/workaholic. Email feedback to this generally boring person at rabitasaleh13@gmail.com

