

My name is Harry Potter.

# The benefits of keeping a diary

SHOUNAK REZA

My cousin gave me a beautiful notebook for my eighth birthday. The pages had a woody fragrance and looked like the parchments we see in the Harry Potter films. I started wondering how I could make the best use of the notebook and after some contemplation, I took a decision. My sister used to keep a diary and inspired by her, I decided to start keeping one as well. I started filling the pages of the notebook with my thoughts, feelings and curiosities.

Looking back, I am grateful to my eight-year-old self for the decision he took as I have identified many benefits of keeping a diary, some of which I will be talking about in this article.

## A PRESERVER OF YOUR MEMORIES

People tend to forget many of the insignificant, but interesting, things they go through everyday. Keeping a diary can help you solve the problem to an extent. It will be possible for you to take a walk down memory lane

whenever you decide to read your old diary entries.

## A WITNESS TO YOUR GROWTH

Experiences shape people. Successes fill them with a sense of purpose and failures give them a reason to work harder. Unbeknownst to them, all these things, as insignificant as some of them might seem, help them grow. These little events are the tiny beads of the necklace that life resembles. While photographs document your physical growth, keeping a diary is the best way to make sure your mental growth stays archived as well. Years later, when life manages to make you a much stronger and determined person, you can skim through the pages of your old diaries and observe how the tiniest things used to bother you when you were younger. Although our gradual mental growth is intangible, it can be captured and preserved using a diary.

## A CONFIDANT

A diary can be a trusted friend, a confidant. Addressing your diary by a name, you can write your entries in the form of letters to a beloved friend. There are times you

might find it hard to verbally express yourself. There are things you might not want to share with someone else. In these cases, you could just resort to your diary and pour out your soul. However, it should be kept in mind that a diary cannot, and should not, replace real life friendships by any means. Your diary should be one of your several confidants, not your only confidant.

## A RECORD OF FAMILY ANECDOTES

My mother recently discovered a diary kept by my late grandfather. It is filled with family anecdotes and descriptions of family members I didn't even know about. This made me realise that decades or even centuries later, your descendants could come across your diaries while rummaging through heirloom bookshelves and get to know more about you and your family history.

*When he is not dealing with mood swings, Shounak Reza devours books and tea and longs for eras he has never lived in. You can contact him at [www.facebook.com/shounakreza](http://www.facebook.com/shounakreza)*

# Breaking out of a procrastination cycle

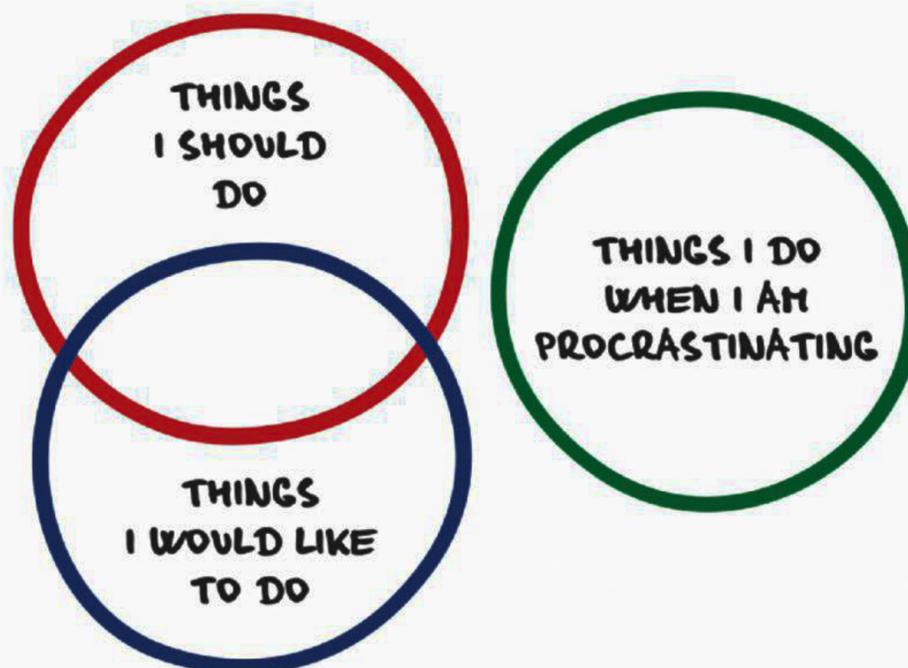
NAZIFA RAIDAH

Scene: You're two hours away from your deadline. You sit at your desk and realise that a cup of coffee will give you a kick start. You drink your coffee while watching a video on YouTube as you tell yourself you're cashing in on your break now and you won't be taking any breaks later. You finish watching one video and a voice whispers, 'What's the harm in watching another? You still have a few hours left.'

And thus, you find yourself trapped in the doomed loop of procrastination. Getting out of this loop is tricky but here are some methods which may work for you.

## RECOGNISE THE SOURCES

A good start to breaking a habit is figuring out what aids the habit i.e, what you do to procrastinate. Do you endlessly scroll your newsfeed? Do you take random online quizzes? Whatever the source may be, do something to stop it. You can switch your phone off and keep it somewhere far where it would require a lot of effort to reach. You could use screen locking apps like Detox, which will only allow you to answer calls. You could also tell your mom or sibling to remind you to finish the job first if they find you lurking around the TV. Block your procrastination at the source, and you'll have nothing to



do but convince yourself to finish it.

## SIT WITH YOUR WORK

To begin any task you must decide to sit with it. Take your time but be adamant to not get up from the chair. Your only job in the world right now is sitting in the chair with the book you've been avoiding for the past six months. You'll find yourself flipping through the images at one point, reading the subtitles and something might spark your interest making

you look into it and before you know it, you've started 'studying'.

## CREATE MANAGEABLE PIECES

A task can often feel daunting because of the amount work involved and the confusion regarding how you'd go about it. But in such circumstances it is important to remind yourself that you need to finish the task first, for now, it doesn't matter if it's good. Make a plan to figure out how you'd reach the end goal and write down

the steps if need be. Now focus on those micro tasks and check off the things you've done. Once you see the checklist getting shorter, you'll feel better about yourself and back yourself to finish.

## REWARD YOURSELF

I know you'd prefer to watch a TV series or scroll your heart out on Facebook rather than finishing your important tasks but what if you could do them both? Create your own reward system. Do not seek YouTube or social media as your reward system because it's easier to get distracted and spend hours there for which, you'll end up hating yourself. If you can finish two chapters then promise to treat yourself to some chocolate or once you're done with the syllabus go out or watch that movie you've been wanting to. It's a win-win situation.

It's important to note that these mechanisms might seem far off your forte but it's important that you try. And once you do, don't be too hard on yourself if you can't pull it off, keep trying. You'll get there grasshopper.

*Nazifa is a twelve year old trapped in a twenty year old body, who is afraid of the dark and believes melted cheese is the solution to all of life's problems. Send help at [nazifa45678@gmail.com](mailto:nazifa45678@gmail.com)*