

There is a relationship between the concepts of prioritizing what we do and incentives for doing certain things in a particular order. This week, here on Coe Creek, the connection is very clear.

I am itching to start a weaving project. But, our income tax declaration is due before the first of March, and I have not started it yet. So, a little “carrot and stick” deception was required to make sure that the necessary paperwork is finished on time and in the mail before the deadline. It is interesting, too, that one can do this to one’s own head—I convinced myself that, although the priority was getting the income tax done, the reward was what was waiting on the loom.

The box of spools of thread for warping the loom sat on the bookcase, tempting me. The box of 2020 farm records reposed under the desk, repelling me. Somehow, there had to be a reconciliation here between what I wanted to do and what I had to do.

So, I had to consider priorities. I knew the income tax papers had to be in the mail this week. But, that box of thread sat there, begging me to open it and transfer it from the cardboard box to the beam of the loom. And, that would require some labor on my part.

I absolutely had to do the income tax this week. But, I thought, if when I finished it, the loom would be warped and waiting for me to begin the pleasant part, the actual weaving, the paperwork might also be less onerous.

A few days ago, then, I wound warp on the beam of the loom, and yesterday, I worked at inserting each thread end—432 of them, one at a time—through each particular eye on the metal heddles that make patterned weaving possible.

This morning, I drew those threads through the loom’s reed, and tied the web of warp snugly to the mechanism that moves the warp around the cloth beam as I weave. Runo helped me hook up the six treadles properly for the pattern I am going to weave. The loom sits there now, a temptation, to be sure, but one that is more incentive than distraction as I tackle the paper work of the income tax declaration.

I will begin that tomorrow. And, someday this coming week. those forms will be in the mail, the record keeping for 2021 will be up to date, the desk will once again be tidy, and I will turn my attention to that warped loom that is sitting there waiting for me.

I do the same regularly in regard to reading. It would be easy to just sit down and read a book that is nearly begging me to pick it up and read. But, the reading is much more satisfying if I have finished some other less pleasant job. Delayed gratification is a concept that is sometimes lacking in today’s society. But, it is one that most of us should have, by now, understood, compliments of the coronavirus pandemic. We have all had to “put off” something we wanted to do that was not safe during present conditions. The easiest choice isn’t always the best one, though it is dubious whether Ted Cruz would have understood that if not for recent public opinion regarding the Cancun caper with which he indulged himself and his family while his fellow Texans suffered.

