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# The art ofDoing Nothing

By Patrick Blennerhassett - Victoria News - February 13, 2008



Mike Vardy celebrates the idea of getting nothing done at his home in Victoria. The comic has taken the art of slowing down to new heights.

Sharon Tiffin/News staff

## Victoria comic rebels against the ‘getting it done’ set

The world of self-improvement can be dizzying and confusing, doing little in the way of self-help at all sometimes.

Just look at the titles of these books: *The 48 Laws of Power*, *The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness*, *Defeat the 7 Deadly Sins*, *How to Live on 24 Hours a Day*, *The 4-Hour Workweek*, *The 33 Strategies of War*.

Not only that, titles of other self-help books seem blatantly moronic, as if people need everything laid out in laymen’s terms: *I’m OK, You’re OK*, *Success Is a Choice*, *The Rules*, and my personal favourite, the twin books *Getting Past NO* and *Getting to YES*.

Now local sketch comedian Mike Vardy, also a member of the 30 Cent Players, has decided to parody the whole self-help industry à la Stephen Colbert and his late-night TV *Colbert Report*. Vardy created and launched [effingthedog.com](http://effingthedog.com) on Jan. 12 to promote, well, doing nothing instead of something.

“I was watching the *Colbert Report* and what he does is pretend to be this right-wing pundit by doing what I’m doing and reporting on things,” said Vardy. “And it makes the left look so much better. And I’ve been looking for a solo project to do for a while so I kind of got around to this eventually.”

The website features tips on how to be as unproductive as possible, bringing back the art of procrastination. Vardy, listed on the website as an E.P.E. (Eventual Productivity Expert) recently went through a spell of reading shelves full of productivity books, such as David Allen’s New York Times bestseller *Getting Things Done* (Allen has since trademarked *Getting Things Done*, being the productive guy he is).

“My thought process was you can be much happier if you just ‘eff the dog’,” he said. “If you don’t do anything you can make that a system of not doing anything. So what my site is trying to say is that it’s better to have some system in place than no system at all. So ‘effing the dog’ is a system. All those things sort of come back to the tag-line which is ‘if you’re not effing the dog you’re doing something.’”

Vardy has encountered a few nay-sayers who don’t like the title and it’s supposed connotation. However any productive person can go online to Urban Dictionary and find six different definitions and synonyms such as – ‘Screwing the pooch’, ‘Shooting the shit’, ‘Not doing anything in particular because you have nothing to do, or in an attempt to kill time’ and of course, ‘What G.W. Bush does at the White House.’


They all mean the same thing, which is basically ‘doing nothing when you should be doing something.’ Vardy said even the process of trying to be productive can be unproductive. “When people get into a productivity system they get so bogged down with the details,” he said. “And I’ve found that myself as well I’ve tried so many different kinds and I found I wasn’t getting anything done. So basically I was ‘effing the dog’, because I was trying to implement these systems and I couldn’t. So eventually I just sat down and chose the one I liked the best.”

One recent post exemplified *Effing The Dog* particularly well, summing up the website’s crux. Vardy was supposed to post a Podcast interview last Friday with *SlowDownFast* author David B. Bohl, but had that pushed back a day due to “intense meditation.”

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