

Dirty Water....

When I was growing up, my mother often used the saying “don’t throw out the dirty water until you have clean water”. Having grown up in the depression and WWII generation for her being safe and conservative in choices made a *huge* amount of sense. She would use this saying as an explanation for anything from why not to dump an old boyfriend (especially when SHE wanted me to keep him and I wanted out!) to changing majors in college (I *knew* I wanted science but she wanted me to have a profession to “fall back upon” so I started out as a pharmacy major, then switched to education – which she was thrilled about as she was a beloved teacher – and then to my real love – chemistry).

But as I got older, I often wondered and then said to her “BUT if the sink is filled with dirty water, there is no room for the clean. It’s a physics problem, mom. So I *have to get rid of the dirty water so there’s room for clean* – both physically and psychologically.” She wasn’t buying.

So now that I’m *really* older, here’s my take. She had it right all along – with some nuances.

First, it depends on *what* the water represents (a job, a relationship, an old coat..), *how* you think of the dirty water (semi-tolerable or totally intolerable) and *when* you deal with it (MUST it be dealt with immediately for your safety and well being or can dealing with it happen in stages).

Second, it also depends on *whether* your sink has one or two compartments – like the sinks with a side for washing dishes and a side for rinsing.

So where am I going with this...if you’re in a rut in a job *but* need the income – as 99.999999999% of us do – then a two compartment sink is a great thing to have. ACKNOWLEDGE that you need to change (clean water) and take actions to do so WHILE keeping the job (dirty water) but seeing it through the lens of the skills, contacts, experiences you can gain as you transition to the next place.

I’ve actually done this myself, and I can tell you that it works. It’s not always easy, it’s not always fast But it is effective for keeping your bank account and sanity both seemingly intact. The challenge is NOT TO GET STUCK WITH BOTH SINKS FOREVER. If you do, then BOTH get filled with dirty water, and then you really have physics problem!

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