

It may not be what you think it is (01/06/2020)

Our toilet had had a leaking problem for a few months. The symptom was that after the flush button was pressed, there was water leaking into the toilet. Sometimes the leakage stopped after a while, maybe 10-15 minutes. Sometimes, the leakage would not stop until I did something to stop it.

I often used the following method to stop the leaking. The button has two components. One is for number 1. The other is for number 2. I discovered that when I put pressure on the right point of one of the components, the leakage would stop. The problem was that it was just a vague feeling. Sometimes I got it right the first time. Other times, it took me quite a few attempts before I hit the right spot, which was quite irritating when I was performing an urgent project.

On those really unlucky occasions, it took quite a lot of self control to not get annoyed. Therefore I quite often used this as an opportunity to practice my conscious awareness. However, it did trigger a desire to fix it and that desire became stronger each time I went through the undesirable experience.

About a week ago, I reached my limit. I had a quite busy and stressful day, then I encountered this recurring issue again. I lost it. I felt I couldn't take it anymore. So I asked my husband to order a new flushing mechanism to fix this problem.

After a few days we received the product. It took my husband

quite a lot of effort to replace the old one with the new one. When it was all done, we discovered that we now had a new problem on top of the old one – the little float, which was supposed to move to the upper position to stop filling the tank with more water when water level reached certain height, did not do what it was supposed to do. In other words, we had to manually move it to the higher position, otherwise the tank would overflow.

Of course, the water still leaked into the toilet after the flush button was pressed. By then, my husband was already exhausted (don't forget, he was still very ill and had done quite a lot in the narrow space between the sink and toilet). So we decided to call our landlord.

Then something very unexpected happened. At about a quarter past ten that night, I went to toilet. After I flushed the toilet, my right hand suddenly had an unintended movement. Somehow it hit a delicate part of the new mechanism my husband installed a few hours ago, which looked like a little fork with a strange handle. It hit it so hard that the little plastic component fell into the tank.

I thought to myself, 'Shit, I broke it!' I picked it up and managed to put it back to its original place. I didn't really know how they fitted together. So I just guessed and did my best. Then I went downstairs and told my husband that I might have broken the new mechanism. He said, 'Don't worry about it. The landlord is going to send someone to repair it anyway.'

In the next two days, I closely observed our toilet. To my surprise, it seemed that it was working fine. Yesterday I messaged our landlord asking them not to send anyone, because

the toilet had fixed itself.

Yesterday afternoon, I put the lid back onto the water tank of the toilet. Then the old problem returned. When I removed the lid and used the round disk (which was directly under the push button of the lid) on the mechanism to flush the toilet, the problem disappeared again.

I was confused, but I didn't mention it to my husband. I moved onto other tasks, but this puzzle stayed in the background of my mind. A few hours later, when I was watching TV with my husband I suddenly understood the answer for the big 'Why'. The reason was very simple: something wasn't quite right with the round disk on the flushing mechanism.

It only worked properly when being pushed in the middle, which was what I did when the lid was removed. This was not easily achieved when the lid was on. Because the push button had two halves. Therefore when you push either half, you are not pushing the middle of the disk, therefore the leak.

After this realization I deeply regret that I have asked my husband to buy and install the new mechanism, which cost £13 (which is quite a lot for us at the moment) and a lot of physical pain for my husband. All of them could have been easily avoided if I didn't jump into conclusion before I had done a thorough investigation.

Why am I writing about something so trivial? Because the underlying lesson of this trivial matter can be applied to other bigger issues in life.

How many times have you jumped into conclusion and made an unwise decision which you deeply regret afterwards? I have done that a lot of times, including after I have become a lot more aware of what's happening within and without.

How to avoid making the same mistake again? Don't solely rely on your senses and thought. Look at the facts. Why? Because things are not always what / how we think they are. Sometimes the real cause of a problem is very different from the apparent cause, like our toilet leaking problem.