13. Effort Activity: Frogs and Banisters

This activity focuses on the separate advice of two academics. The 'frogs' part of this advice comes from time management guru Brian Tracy, who in *Eat That Frog!* (2013) asks his readers to imagine that tasks are frogs you have to eat. He chooses this metaphor because the thought of such tasks is often very off-putting. His advice is as follows: 'If you have to eat two frogs, eat the ugliest one first' (p. 2).

This is another way of saying that if you have important tasks to apply your effort to, start with the biggest, hardest and most important one first. This is related to Tim Ferriss' idea of the 'lead domino' (which he talks about in his podcast 'How to Build a Large Audience From Scratch (And More)' at http://fourhourworkweek.com): if you do the tough tasks first, your effort will be worthwhile because it will pay dividends later. So, list all your frog tasks – in order of ugliness!

The 'banisters' part comes from computer science professor Randy Pausch. 'It doesn't matter how well you polish the underside of the banister,' says Pausch (2010, p. 108). In other words, don't worry about unimportant details – put your effort where the result will be greatest.

List the work you've done recently. Have you been eating ugly frogs (getting tough, important jobs done) or have you been polishing the underside of the banister (half-heartedly completing easier looking jobs that aren't really important)?

| Frogs | Banisters |
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Effort

| Final Thoughts |
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| Which jobs are you doing that you can stop? |
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| Which jobs are you avoiding that you should tackle? |
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