

CHAPTER 10

Take It One Oil Barrel at A Time

"Persons with comparatively moderate powers will accomplish much if they apply themselves wholly and indefatigably to one thing at a time."

Samuel Smiles

There is an old saying that, "By the yard it's hard; but inch by inch, anything's a cinch!"

One of the best ways to overcome procrastination is for you to get your mind off the huge task in front of you and focus on a single action that you can take. One of the best ways to eat a large frog is for you to take it one bite at a time.

Confucius wrote that, "A journey of a thousand leagues begins with a single step." This is a great strategy for overcoming procrastination and getting more things done faster.

Crossing a Great Desert

Many years ago, driving an old Land Rover, I crossed the heart of the Sahara Desert, the Tenezrouft, deep in modern day Algeria. By that time, the desert had been abandoned by the French for years and the original refueling stations were empty and shuttered.

The desert was 500 miles across in a single stretch, without water, food, a blade of grass or even a fly. It was totally flat, like a broad yellow sand parking lot that stretched to the horizon in all directions.

More than 1300 people had perished in the crossing of that stretch of the Sahara in previous years. Often drifting sands had obliterated the track across the desert and the travelers had gotten lost in the night, never to be found again alive.

To counter this lack of features in the terrain as you crossed that flat wasteland, the French had marked the track with black, 55 gallon oil drums, five kilometers apart, which was exactly the curvature of the earth.

Because of this, wherever you were in the daytime, you could see two oil barrels, the one you had just passed and the one five kilometers ahead. And that was all you needed to stay on course.

All you had to do was to steer for the next oil barrel. As a result, we were able to cross the biggest desert in the world by simply taking it “one oil barrel at a time.”

Take It One Step at a Time

In the same way, you can accomplish the biggest task in your life by disciplining yourself to take it just one step at a time. Your job is to go as far as you can see. You will then see far enough to go further.

To accomplish a great task, you must step out in faith and have complete confidence that your next step will soon become clear to you. Remember the wonderful advice, "Leap — and the net will appear!"

A great life, a great career is built by performing one task at a time, quickly and well, and then going on to the next task.

Financial independence is achieved by saving a little money every single month, year after year. Health and fitness are accomplished by just eating a little less and exercising a little more, day after day and month after month.

You can overcome procrastination and accomplish extraordinary things by just taking the first step, by getting started toward your goal and by then taking it one step, one oil barrel at a time.

Eat That Frog!

1. Select any goal, task or project in your life where you have been procrastinating and make a list of all the steps you will need to take to eventually complete the task.
2. Then take just one step immediately. Sometimes, all you need to do to get started is to sit down and complete one item on the list. And then do one more, and so on. You will be amazed at what you eventually accomplish.