

CHAPTER 18

Slice and Dice the Task

"The beginning of a habit is like an invisible thread, but every time we repeat the act we strengthen the strand, add to it another filament, until it becomes a great cable and binds us irrevocably in thought and act."

Orison Swett Marden

A major reason for procrastinating on big, important tasks is that they appear so large and formidable when you first approach them.

One technique that you can use to cut a big task down to size is the "Salami slice" method of getting work done.

With this method, you lay out the task in detail and then resolve to do just *one slice* of the job for the time being, like eating a roll of salami, one slice at a time. Or like eating an elephant one bite at a time.

Psychologically, you will find it easier to do a single, small piece of a large project than to start on the whole job.

Often, once you have started and completed a single part of the job, you will feel like doing just one more "slice."

Soon, you will find yourself working through the job one part at a time, and before you know it, the job will be completed.

Develop a Compulsion to Closure

An important point to remember is that you have deep within you an "urge to completion" or what is often referred to as a "compulsion to closure."

This means that you actually feel happier and more powerful when you start and complete a task of any kind. You satisfy a deep subconscious need to bring finality to a job or project. This sense of completion or closure motivates you to start into the next task or project and then to persist toward final completion. This act of completion triggers that release of endorphins in your brain that we talked about earlier.

And the bigger the task you start and complete, the better and more elated you feel. The bigger the frog you eat, the greater the surge of personal power and energy you will experience.

When you start and finish a small piece of a task, you feel motivated to start and finish another part, and then another, and so on. Each small step forward energizes you. You soon develop an inner drive that motivates you to carry through to completion. This completion gives you the great feeling of happiness and satisfaction that accompanies any success.

Swiss Cheese Your Tasks

Another technique you can use to get yourself going is called the "Swiss cheese" method of working. You use this technique to get yourself into gear by resolving to punch a hole into the task, like a hole in a block of Swiss Cheese.

You *Swiss cheese* a task when you resolve to work for a specific time period on a task. This may be as little as five or ten minutes, after which you will stop and do something else. You will just take one bite of your frog and then rest, or do something else.

The power of this method is similar to the salami slice method. Once you start working, you develop a sense of forward momentum and a feeling of accomplishment. You become energized and enthusiastic. You feel yourself internally motivated and propelled to keep going until the task is complete.

You should try the "Salami Slice" or the "Swiss cheese" method on any task that seems overwhelming when you approach it for the first time. You will be amazed at how helpful these techniques are in overcoming procrastination.

I have several friends who have become best selling authors by simply resolving to write one page, or even one paragraph per day until the book was completed. And you can do the same.

Eat That Frog!

1. Put one of these techniques into action immediately. Take a large, complex, multi-task job that you've been putting off and either "salami slice" or "Swiss cheese" it to get started.

2. Become action-oriented. A common quality of high performance men and women is that, when they hear a good idea, they take action on it immediately. As a result, they learn more, faster, and get much better results. Don't delay. Try it today!