**Eat That Frog!**

**21 Great Ways to Stop Procrastinating and Get More Done in Less Time**

**1 SETTING THE TABLE**

* Take a clean sheet of paper right now and make a list of ten goals you want to accomplish in the next year. Write your goals as though a year has already passed and they are now reality. Use the present tense, positive voice, and first person singular so that they are immediately accepted by your subconscious mind. For example, you could write “I earn x number of dollars per year by this date.”
* Review your list of ten goals and select the one goal that, if you achieved it, would have the greatest positive impact on your life. Whatever that goal is, write it on a separate sheet of paper, set a deadline, make a plan, take action on your plan, and then do something every single day that moves you toward that goal. This exercise alone could change your life!

**2 PLAN EVERY DAY IN ADVANCE**

* Begin today to plan every day, week, and month in advance. Take a notepad or sheet of paper (or use your smartphone) and make a list of everything you have to do in the next twenty-four hours. Add to your list as new items come up. Make a list of all your projects, the big multitask jobs that are important to your future.
* Lay out all your major goals, projects, and tasks by priority, what is most important, and by sequence, what has to be done first, what comes second, and so forth. Start with the end in mind and work backwards.
* Think on paper! Always work from a list. You’ll be amazed at how much more productive you become and how much easier it is to eat your frog.

**3 APPLY THE 80/20 RULE TO EVERYTHING**

* Make a list of all the key goals, activities, projects, and responsibilities in your life today. Which of them are, or could be, in the top 10 or 20 percent of tasks that represent, or could represent, 80 or 90 percent of your results?
* Resolve today that you are going to spend more and more of your time working in those few areas that can really make a difference in your life and career and spend less and less time on lower-value activities.

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**4 CONSIDER THE CONSEQUENCES**

* Review your list of tasks, activities, and projects regularly. Continually ask yourself, “Which one project or activity, if I did it in an excellent and timely fashion, would have the greatest positive consequence in my work or personal life?”
* Determine the most important thing you could be doing every hour of every day, and then discipline yourself to work continually on the most valuable use of your time. What is this for you right now?
* Whatever it is that can help you the most, set it as a goal, make a plan to achieve it, and go to work on your plan immediately. Remember the wonderful words of Goethe: “Only engage, and the mind grows heated. Begin it, and the work will be completed.”

**5 PRACTICE CREATIVE PROCRASTINATION**

* Practice “zero-based thinking" in every part of your life. Ask yourself continually, “If I were not doing this already, know what I now know, would I start doing it again today?” If it is something you would not start again today, knowing what you now know, it is a prime candidate for abandonment or creative procrastination.
* Examine each of your personal and work activities and evaluate it based on your current situation. Select at least one activity to abandon immediately or at least deliberately put off until your more important goals have been achieved.

**6 USE THE ABCDE METHOD CONTINUALLY**

* Review your work list right now and put an A, B, C, D, or E next to each task or activity. Select your A-1 job or project and begin on it immediately. Discipline yourself to do nothing else until this one job is complete.
* Practice this ABCDE Method every day for the next month on every work or project list before you begin work. After a month, you will have developed the habit of setting and working on your highest-priority tasks, and your future will be assured!

**7 FOCUS OF KEY RESULTS AREAS**

* Identify the key result areas of your work. What are they? Write down the key results you have to get to do your job in an excellent fashion. Give yourself a grade. And then determine the one key skill that, if you did it in an excellent manner, would help you the most in your work.
* Take this list to your boss and discuss it with him or her. Invite honest feedback and appraisal. You can only get better when you are open to the constructive input of other people. Discuss your conclusions with your staff and coworkers. Talk them over with your spouse.
* Make a habit of doing this analysis regularly for the rest of your career. Never stop improving. This decision alone can change your life.

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**8 APPLY THE LAW OF THREE**

* Determine the three most important tasks that you do in your work. Ask yourself, “If I could do only one thing all day long, which one task would contribute the greatest value to my career?” Do this exercise two more times. Once you have identified your “big three,” concentrate on them single-mindedly all day long.
* Identify your three most important goals in each area of your life. Organize them by priority. Make plans for their accomplishment, and work on your plans every single day. You will be amazed at what you achieve in the months and years ahead.

**9 PREPARE THOROUGHLY BEFORE YOU BEGIN**

* Take a good look at your desk or office, both at home and at work. Ask yourself, “What kind of a person works in an environment like this?” The cleaner and neater your work environment, the more positive, productive, and confident you will feel.
* Resolve today to clean up your desk and office completely so that you feel effective, efficient, and ready to get going each time you sit down to work.

**10 TAKE IT ONE OIL BARREL AT A TIME**

* Select any goal, task, or project in your life on which you have been procrastinating and make a list of all the steps you will need to take to eventually complete the task.
* 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.

**11 UPGRADE YOUR KEY SKILLS**

* Identify the key skills that can help you the most to achieve better and faster results. Determine the core competencies that you will need to have in the future to lead your field. Whatever they are, set a goal, make a plan, and begin developing and increasing your ability in those areas. Decide to be the very best at what you do!
* Develop a personal plan to prepare yourself to do your most important tasks in an excellent fashion. Focus on those areas where you have special talents and that you most enjoy. This is the key to unlocking your personal potential.

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**12 IDENTIFY YOU KEY CONSTRAINTS**

* Identify your most important goal in life today. What is it? What one goal, if you achieved it, would have the greatest positive effect on your life? What one career accomplishment would have the greatest positive impact on your work life?
* Determine the one constraint, internal or external, that sets the speed at which you accomplish this goal. Ask, “Why haven’t I reached it already? What is it in me that is holding me back?” Whatever your answers, take action immediately. Do something. Do anything, but get started.

**13 PUT THE PRESSURE ON YOURSELF**

* Set deadlines and sub-deadlines on every task and activity. Create your own “forcing system.” Raise the bar on yourself and don’t let yourself off the hook. Once you’ve set yourself a deadline, stick to it and even try to beat it.
* Write out every step of a major job or project before you begin. Determine how many minutes and hours you will require to complete each phase. Then race against your own clock. Beat your own deadlines. Make it a game and resolve to win!

**14 MOTIVATE YOURSELF INTO ACTION**

* Control your thoughts. Remember you become what you think about most of the time. Be sure that you are thinking and talking about the things you want rather than the things you don’t want.
* Keep your mind positive by accepting complete responsibility for yourself and for everything that happens to you. Refuse to criticize others, complain, or blame others for anything. Resolve to make progress rather than excuses. Keep your thoughts and your energy focused forward, on what you can do right now to improve your life, and let the rest go.

**15 TECHNOLOGY IS A TERRIBLE MASTER**

* Resolve today to create zones of silence during your day-to-day activities. Turn off your computer and your smartphone for one hour in the morning and one hour in the afternoon. You will be amazed at what happens: nothing.
* Resolve to unplug from technology for one full day each week. By the end of your digital detox, your mind will be calm and clear. When your mental batteries have time to recharge, you will be much more effective at eating frogs.

**16 TECHNOLOGY IS A WONDERFUL SERVANT**

* Resolve today to turn off all your notifications, except for your emergency channels. Create special areas in your digital life for your most important tasks.
* Resolve to research and install one piece of software or one app that will help you be more efficient and focused.

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**17 FOCUS YOUR ATTENTION**

* Keep your goals of success and high productivity in mind. Before you do anything, ask yourself, “Is this helping me achieve one of my most important goals, or is this just a distraction?”
* Refuse to become a slave to the bells and whistles that distract you from completing those tasks that can make a real difference in your life. Leave your devices off.

**18 SLICE AND DICE THE TASK**

* Put the “salami slice” or “Swiss cheese” technique into action immediately to get started on a large, complex, multitask job that you’ve been putting off.
* Become action oriented. A common quality of high performers is that when they hear a good idea, they take action on it immediately. Don’t delay. Try it today!

**19 CREATE LARGE CHUNKS OF TIME**

* Think continually of different ways that you can save, schedule, and consolidate large chunks of time. Use these times to work on important tasks with the most significant long-term consequences.
* Make every minute count. Work steadily and continuously without diversion or distraction by planning and preparing your work in advance. Most of all, keep focused on the most important results for which you are responsible.

**20 DEVELOP A SENSE OF URGENCY**

* Resolve today to develop a sense of urgency in everything you do. Select one area where you have a tendency to procrastinate and make a decision to develop the habit of fast action in that area.
* When you see an opportunity or a problem, take action on it immediately. When you are given a task or responsibility, take care of it quickly and report back fast. Move rapidly in every important area of your life. You will be amazed at how much better you feel and how much more you get done.

**21 SINGLE HANDLE EVERY TASK**

* Take action! Resolve today to select the most important task or project that you could complete and then launch into it immediately.
* Once you start your most important task, discipline yourself to persevere without diversion or distraction until it is 100 percent complete. See it as a test to determine whether you are the kind of person who can make a decision to complete something and then carry it out. Once you begin, refuse to stop until the job is finished.

**Preface**

* You can get control of your time and your life only by changing the way you think, work, and deal with the never-ending river of responsibilities that flows over you each day.
* You can get control of your tasks and activities only to the degree that you stop doing some things and start spending more time on the few activities that can really make a difference in your life.
* Just find out what other successful people do and do the same things until you get the same results. Learn from the experts.
* Simply put, some people are doing better than others because they do things differently and they do the right things right. Especially, successful, happy, prosperous people use their time far, far better than the average person.
* The ability to concentrate single-mindedly on your most important task, to do it well and to finish it completely, is the key to great success, achievement, respect, status, and happiness in life.
* The key to success is action. There will be no limit to what you can accomplish when you learn how to Eat That Frog!
* Cut to the core of what is vital to effective time management: decision, discipline, and determination.

**Introduction ∙ Eat That Frog**

* There are so many good things that you can do that your ability to decide among them may be the critical determinant of what you accomplish in life.

***The Need to Be Selective***

* Your ability to select your most important task at each moment, and then to get started on that task and to get it done both **quickly and well**, will probably have more of an impact on your success than any other quality or skill you can develop.

***The Truth about Frogs***

* Your “frog” is your biggest, most important task, the one you are most likely to procrastinate on if you don't do something about it. It is also the one task that can have the greatest positive impact on your life and results at the moment.
* The first rule of frog eating is this: **IF YOU HAVE TO EAT TWO FROGS, EAT THE UGLIEST ONE FIRST.** If you have two important tasks before you, start with the biggest, hardest, and most important task first. Discipline yourself to begin immediately and then to persist until the task is complete before you go on to something else.
* Think of the first rule as a test. Treat it like a personal challenge. Resist the temptation to start with the easier task. Continually remind yourself that one of the most important decisions you make each day is what you will do immediately and what you will do later, if you do it at all.
* The second rule of frog eating is this: **IF YOU HAVE TO EAT A LIVE FROG AT ALL, IT DOESN’T PAY TO SIT AND LOOK AT IT FOR VERY LONG.** The key to reaching high levels of performance and productivity is to develop the lifelong habit of tackling your major task first thing each morning. You must develop the routine of “eating your frog” before you do anything else and without taking too much time to think about it.

***Take Action Immediately***

* Successful, effective people are those who launch directly into their major tasks and then discipline themselves to work steadily and single-mindedly until those tasks are complete.
* “Failure to execute” is one of the biggest problems in organizations today. Many people confuse activity with accomplishment. They talk continually, hold endless meetings, and make wonderful plans, but in the final analysis, no one does the job and gets the results required.

**Introduction ∙ Eat That Frog**

***Develop the Habits of Success***

* The habit of setting priorities, overcoming procrastination, and getting on with your most important task is a mental and physical skill. As such, this habit is learnable through practice and repetition, over and over again, until it locks into your subconscious mind and becomes a permanent part of your behavior.
* Whenever you complete a task of any size or importance, you feel a surge of energy, enthusiasm, and self-esteem. The more important the completed task, the happier, more confident, and more powerful you feel about yourself and your world. The endorphin rush that follows successful completion of any task makes you feel more positive, personable, creative, and confident.

***Develop a Positive Addiction***

* You can actually develop a “positive addiction” to endorphins and to the feeling of enhanced clarity, confidence, and competence that they trigger. You will actually become addicted, in a very positive sense, to success and contribution.
* One of the keys to living a wonderful life, having a successful career, and feeling terrific about yourself is to develop the habit of starting and finishing important jobs. When you do, this behavior will take on a power of its own and you’ll find it easier to complete important tasks than not to complete them.

***No Shortcuts***

* Practice is the key to mastering any skill. With practice, you can learn any behavior or develop any habit that you consider either desirable or necessary.

***The Three Ds of New Habit Formation***

* You need three key qualities to develop the habits of focus and concentration, which are all learnable. They are **decision**, **discipline**, and **determination**.
* First, make a decision to develop the habit of task completion.
* Second, discipline yourself to practice the principles you are about to learn over and over until they become automatic.
* Third, back everything you do with determination until the habit is locked in and becomes a permanent part of your personality.

**Introduction ∙ Eat That Frog**

***Visualize Yourself as You Want to Be***

* Think continually about the rewards and benefits of being an action-oriented, fast-moving, and focused person. See yourself as the kind of person who gets **important jobs done quickly and well on a consistent basis**.
* Visualize yourself as the person you intend to be in the future. Your self-image, the way you see yourself on the inside, largely determines your performance on the outside.
* All improvements in your outer life begin with improvements on the inside, in your mental pictures. You have a virtually unlimited ability to learn and develop new skills, habits, and abilities.
* When you train yourself, through repetition and practice, to overcome procrastination and get your most important tasks completed quickly, you will move onto the fast track in your life and career and step on the accelerator of your potential.

**1 ∙ Set the Table**

* There is one quality which one must possess to win, and that is definiteness of purpose, the knowledge of what one wants and a burning desire to achieve it. – *Napolean Hill*
* Before you can determine your “frog” and get on with the job of eating it, you have to decide exactly what you want to achieve in each area of your life. Clarity is perhaps the most important concept in personal productivity.
* The greater clarity you have regarding what you want and the steps you will have to take to achieve it, the easier it will be for you to overcome procrastination, eat your frog, and complete the task before you.
* A major reason for procrastination and lack of motivation is vagueness, confusion, and fuzzy mindedness about what you are trying to do and in what order and for what reason.
* There is a powerful seven-part method for setting and achieving goals that you can use for the rest of your life.
  + Step 1: *Decide exactly what you want.* Discuss your goals and objectives until you are crystal clear about what is expected of you and in what order of priority. One of the very worst uses of time is to do something very well that need not be done at all.
  + Step 2: *Write it down.* When you write down a goal, you crystallize it and give it tangible form. You create something that you can touch and see. On the other hand, a goal or objective that is not in writing is merely a wish or a fantasy. Unwritten goals lead to confusion, vagueness, misdirection, and numerous mistakes.
  + Step 3: *Set a deadline on your goal; set sub-deadlines if necessary.* A goal or decision without a deadline has no urgency. It has no real beginning or end. Without a definite deadline accompanied by the assignment or acceptance of specific responsibilities for completion, you will naturally procrastinate and get very little done.
  + Step 4: *Make a list of everything you can think of that you are going to have to do to achieve your goal.* As you think of new activities, add them to your list. Keep building your list until it is complete.
  + Step 5: *Organize the list into a plan.* Organize your list by priority and sequence. Take a few minutes to decide what you need to do first and what you can do later. Even better, lay out your plan visually in the form of a series of boxes and circles on a sheet of paper, with lines and arrows showing the relationship of each task to every other task.
  + Step 6: *Take action on your plan immediately.* Do something. Do anything. An average plan vigorously executed is far better than a brilliant plan on which nothing is done. For you to achieve any kind of success, execution is everything.
  + Step 7: *Resolve to do something every single day that moves you toward your major goal.* Build this activity into your daily schedule. For example, you may decide to read a specific number of pages on a key subject. Whatever it is, you must never miss a day. Keep pushing forward. Don’t stop. This decision, this discipline alone, can dramatically increase your speed of goal accomplishment and boost your personal productivity.

**1 ∙ Set the Table (continued)**

***The Power of Written Goals***

* Clear written goals have a wonderful effect on your thinking. They motivate you and galvanize you into action. They stimulate your creativity, release your energy, and help you overcome procrastination as much as any other factor.
* The bigger your goals and the clearer they are, the more excited you become about achieving them. The more you think about your goals, the greater becomes your inner drive and your desire to accomplish them.
* Think about your goals and review them daily. Every morning when you begin, take action on the most important task you can accomplish to achieve your most important goal at the moment.

**2 ∙ Plan Every Day in Advance**

* Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now.
* How do you eat your biggest, ugliest frog? You break it down into specific step-by-step activities and then you start on the first one.
* Your mind, your ability to think, plan, and decide, is your most powerful tool for overcoming procrastination and increasing your productivity. Your ability to set goals, make plans, and take action on them determines the course of your life. The very act of thinking and planning unlocks your mental powers, triggers your creativity, and increases your mental and physical energies.
* “Taking action without thinking things through is a prime source of problems.”
* Your ability to make good plans before you act is a measure of your overall competence. The better the plan you have, the easier it is for you to overcome procrastination, to get started, to eat your frog, and then to keep going.

***Increase Your Return on Energy***

* One of your top goals at work should be to get the highest possible return on your investment of your mental, emotional, and physical energy.
* The good news is that every minute planning saves as many as ten minutes in execution.
* It takes only about 10 to 12 minutes for you to plan your day, but this small investment of time will save you 100 to 120 minutes in wasted time and diffuse effort throughout the day. It is based on your sitting down and making a list of everything you have to do before you begin.
* “Proper prior planning prevents poor performance.”

***Two Extra Hours per Day***

* Always work from a list. When something new comes up, add it to the list before you do it.
* Make your list the night before for the workday ahead. Move everything you have not yet accomplished onto your list for the coming day, and then add everything that you have to do the next day. The more time you take to make written lists of everything you have to do, in advance, the more effective and efficient you will be.

***Different Lists for Different Purposes***

* You need different lists for different purposes.
* First, you should create a master list on which you write down everything you can think of that you want to do sometime in the future. This is the place where you capture every idea and every new task or responsibility that comes up. You can sort out the items later.
* Second, you should have a monthly list that you make at the end of the month for the month ahead. This may contain items transferred from your master list.
* Third, you should have a weekly list where you plan your entire week in advance. This is a list that is under construction as you go through the current week. The habit of taking a couple of hours at the end of each week to plan the coming week has increased their productivity dramatically and changed their lives completely.
* Finally, you should transfer items from your monthly and weekly lists onto your daily list. These are the specific activities that you are going to accomplish the following day.
* Seeing yourself working progressively through your list motivates and energizes you. It raises your self-esteem and self-respect. Steady, visible progress propels you forward and helps you overcome procrastination.

***Planning a Project***

* When you have a project of any kind, begin by making a list of every step that you will have to complete to finish the project from beginning to end.
* Organize the steps by priority, what is most important, and sequence, which tasks you must complete in order.
* Lay out the project in front of you on paper or on a computer-based project planner so that you see every step and task.
* Then go to work on one task at a time. As you work through your lists, you will feel more and more effective and powerful. You will feel more in control of your life. You will be naturally motivated to do even more. You will think better and more creatively, and you will get more and better insights that enable you to do your work even faster.
* As you work steadily through your lists, you will develop a sense of positive forward momentum that enables you to overcome procrastination. This feeling of progress gives you more energy and keeps you going throughout the day.
* One of the most important rules of personal effectiveness is the 10/90 rule that says the first 10 percent of time that you spend planning and organizing your work before you begin will save you as much as 90 percent of the time in getting the job done once you get started.
* When you plan each day in advance, you will find it much easier to get going and to keep going.

**3 ∙ Apply the 80/20 Rule to Everything**

* The 80/20 Rule is one of the most helpful of all concepts of time and life management. It is also called the “Pareto Principle” after the Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto. Basically, if you have a list of ten items to do, two of those items will turn out to be worth much more than the other eight items put together.

***Number of Tasks versus Importance of Tasks***

* Often, a single task can be worth more than all the other nine items put together. This task is invariably the frog that you should eat first.
* The sad fact is that most people procrastinate on the top 10 or 20 percent of items that are the most valuable and important, the “vital few.” They busy themselves instead with the least important 80 percent, the “trivial many” that contribute very little to results.

***Focus of Activities, Not Accomplishments***

* You often see people who appear to be busy all day long but seem to accomplish very little. This is almost always because they are busy working on tasks that are of low value while they are procrastinating on the one or two activities that, if they completed them quickly and well, could make a real difference to their companies and to their careers.
* The most valuable tasks you can do each day are often the hardest and most complex. But the payoff and rewards for completing these tasks efficiently can be tremendous. For this reason, you must adamantly refuse to work on tasks in the bottom 80 percent while you still have tasks in the top 20 percent left to be done.
* Before you begin work, always ask yourself, “Is this task in the top 20 percent of my activities or in the bottom 80 percent?”
* **RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO CLEAR UP** SMALL **THINGS FIRST**
* If you choose to start your day working on low-value tasks, you will soon develop the habit of always starting and working on low-value tasks. This is not the kind of habit you want to develop or keep.
* The hardest part of any important task is getting started on it in the first place. Just know that a part of your mind loves to be busy working on significant tasks that can really make a difference. Your job is to feed this part of your mind continually.

***Motivate Yourself***

* Just thinking about starting and finishing an important task motivates you and helps you overcome procrastination. The fact is, the time required to complete an important job is often the same as the time required to do an unimportant job.
* Time management is really life management, personal management. Time management is taking control over what you do next. Your ability to choose between the important and the unimportant is the key determinant of your success in life and work.
* Effective, productive people discipline themselves to start on the most important task that is before them. They force themselves to eat that frog, whatever it is. As a result, they accomplish vastly more than the average person and are much happier as a result.

**4 ∙ Consider the Consequences**

* The mark of the superior thinker is his or her ability to accurately predict the consequences of doing or not doing something.
* The potential consequences of any task or activity are the key determinants of how important a task really is to you and to your company.
* This way of evaluating the significance of a task is how you determine what your next frog really is.
* Your attitude toward time, your “time horizon,” has an enormous impact on your behavior and your choices. People who take a long-term view of their lives and careers always seem to make much better decisions about their time and activities than people who give very little thought to the future.
* Rule: **LONG-TERM THINKING IMROVES SHORT-TERM DECISION MAKING.**
* Successful people have a clear future orientation. They think five, ten, and twenty years out into the future. They analyze their choices and behaviors in the present to make sure that what they are doing today is consistent with the long-term future that they desire.

***Make Better Decisions about Time***

* In your work, having a clear idea of what is really important to you in the long term makes it much easier for you to make better decisions about your priorities in the short term.
* By definition, something that is important has long-term potential consequences. Something that is unimportant has few or no long-term potential consequences.
* Before starting on anything, you should always ask yourself, “What are the potential consequences of doing or not doing this task?”
* Rule: **FUTURE INTENT INFLUENCES AND OFTEN DETERMINES PRESENT ACTIONS.**
* With a clear long-term vision, you are much more capable of evaluating an activity in the present to ensure that it is consistent with where you truly want to end up.

***Think about the Long Term***

* Coming into work earlier, reading regularly in your field, taking courses to improve your skills, and focusing on high-value tasks in your work will all combine to have an enormous positive impact on your future.
* If a task or activity has large potential positive consequences, make it a top priority and get started on it immediately. If something can have large potential negative consequences if it is not done quickly and well, that becomes a top priority as well. Whatever your frog is, resolve to gulp it down first thing.
* Thinking continually about the potential consequences of your choices, decisions, and behaviors is one of the very best ways to determine your true priorities in your work and personal life.

***Obey the Law of Forced Efficiency***

* The Law of Forced Efficiency: There is never enough time to do everything, but there is always enough time to do the most important thing.
* Rule: **THERE WILL NEVER BE ENOUGH TIME TO DO EVERYTHING YOU HAVE TO DO.**
* You will never be caught up. Get that wishful idea out of your mind. All you can hope for is to be on top of your most important responsibilities. The others will just have to wait.

***Deadlines Are an Excuse***

* Under the pressure of deadlines, often self-created through procrastination, people suffer greater stress, make more mistakes, and have to redo more tasks than under any other condition. Sometimes a job actually takes much longer to complete when people rush to get it done at the last minute and then have to redo it.
* It is much better to plan your time carefully in advance and then build in a sizable buffer to compensate for unexpected delays and diversions. However much time you think a task will take, add another 20 percent or more as insurance. Or make a game of getting the job done well in advance of the deadline.
* You will be amazed at how much more relaxed you are and how much better a job you do when you are on top of your most important tasks.

***Three Questions for Maximum Productivity***

* What are my highest-value activities? Put another way, what are the biggest frogs that you have to eat to make the greatest contribution to your organization? To your family? To your life in general? First, think this through for yourself. Then, ask your boss. Ask your coworkers and subordinates. Ask your friends and family.
* What can I and only I do, that if done well, will make a real difference? This is one of the most important of all questions for achieving personal effectiveness. This is something that only you can do. If you don’t do it, it won’t be done by someone else. Every hour of every day, you can ask yourself this question and come up with a specific answer. Your job is to be clear about the answer and then to start and work on this task before anything else.
* What is the most valuable use of my time right now? In other words, what is my biggest frog of all at this moment? Answering this question correctly is the key to overcoming procrastination and becoming a highly productive person.
* “The things that matter the most must never be at the mercy of the things that matter least.”
* The more accurate your answers to these three questions, the easier it will be for you to set clear priorities, to overcome procrastination, and to get started on that one activity that represents the most valuable use of your time.

**5 ∙ Practice Creative Procrastination**

* Make time for getting big tasks done every day. Plan your daily workload in advance. Single out the relatively few small jobs that absolutely must be done immediately in the morning. Then go directly to the big tasks and pursue them to completion.
* The fact is that you can’t do everything that you have to do. You have to procrastinate on something. Therefore, deliberately and consciously procrastinate on small tasks.
* Put off eating smaller or less ugly frogs. Eat the biggest and ugliest frogs before anything else. Do the worst first!
* Everyone procrastinates. The difference between high performers and low performers is largely determined by what they choose to procrastinate on.
* Decide to procrastinate on, outsource, delegate, and eliminate those activities that don’t make much of a contribution to your life in any case. Get rid of the tadpoles and focus on the frogs.

***Priorities versus Posteriorities***

* A priority is something that you do more of and sooner, while a posteriority is something that you do less of and later, if at all.
* Rule: **YOU CAN GET YOUR TIME AND YOUR LIFE UNDER CONTROL ONLY TO THE DEGREE TO WHICH YOU DISCONTINUE LOWER-VALUE ACTIVITIES.**
* One of the most powerful of all words in time management is the word no! Say it politely. Say it clearly so that there are no misunderstandings. Say it regularly as a normal part of your management vocabulary. “Simple. I just say no to everything that is not absolutely vital to me at the moment.” – Warren Buffet. Say no to anything that is not a high-value use of your time and your life.
* For you to do something new, you must complete or stop doing something old. Getting in requires getting out. Picking up means putting down.
* Creative procrastination is the act of thoughtfully and deliberately deciding upon the exact things you are not going to do right now, if ever.

***Procrastinate on Purpose***

* Most people engage in unconscious procrastination. They procrastinate without thinking about it. As a result, they procrastinate on the big, valuable, important tasks that can have significant long-term consequences in their lives and careers. You must avoid this common tendency at all costs.
* Continually review your duties and responsibilities to identify time-consuming tasks and activities that you can abandon with no real loss. This is an ongoing responsibility for you that never ends.

***Set Posteriorities on Time-Consuming Activities***

* Cut down on television watching and Internet surfing and instead spend the time with your family, read, exercise, or do something else that enhances the quality of your life.
* Look at your work activities and identify the tasks that you could delegate or eliminate to free up more time for the work that really counts. Begin today to practice creative procrastination. Set posteriorities wherever and whenever you can. This decision alone can enable you to get your time and your life under control.

**6 ∙ Use the ABCDE Method Continually**

* The first law of success is concentration – to bend all the energies to one point, and to go directly to that point, looking neither to the right nor to the left.
* The ABCDE Method is a powerful priority setting technique that you can use every single day. This technique is so simple and effective that it can, all by itself, make you one of the most efficient and effective people in your field.

***Think on Paper***

* You start with a list of everything you have to do for the coming day. Think on paper.
* You then place an A, B, C, D, or E next to each item on your list before you begin the first task.
* An “A” item is defined as something that is very important, something that you must do. This is a task that will have serious positive or negative consequences if you do it or fail to do it. If you have more than one A task, you prioritize these tasks by writing “A-1”, “A-2”, “A-3” and so on in front of each item. Your A-1 task if your biggest, ugliest frog of all.

***“Shoulds” versus “Musts”***

* A “B” item is defined as a task that you should do. But it has only mild consequences. These are the tadpoles of your work life and are nowhere near as important as A tasks.
* The rule is that you should never do a B task when an A task is left undone. You should never be distracted by a tadpole when a big frog is sitting there waiting to be eaten.
* A “C” task is defined as something that would be nice to do but for which there are no consequences at all, whether you do it or not. These sorts of activities have no effect at all on your work life.
* A “D” task is defined as something you can delegate to someone else. The rule is that you should delegate everything that someone else can do so you can free up more time for the A tasks that only you can do.
* An “E” task is defined as something that you can eliminate altogether, and it won’t make any real difference. This may be a task that was important at one time but is no longer relevant to you or anyone else. Often it is something you continue to do out of habit or because you enjoy it. But every minute that you spend on an E task is time taken away from an A task or activity that can make a real difference in your life.

***Take Action Immediately***

* The key to making this ABCDE Method work is for you to now discipline yourself to start immediately on your A-1 task and then stay at it until it is complete. Eat the whole frog and don’t stop until it’s finished completely.
* Your ability to think through and analyze your work list and determine your A-1 task is the springboard to higher levels of accomplishment and greater self-esteem, self-respect, and personal pride.
* When you develop the habit of concentrating on your A-1, most important, activity – on eating your frog – you will start getting more done than any two or three people around you.

**7 ∙ Focus on Key Result Areas**

* When every physical and mental resource is focused, one’s power to solve a problem multiplies tremendously.
* “Why am I on the payroll?” This is one of the most important questions you can ever ask and answer, over and over again, throughout your career.
* As it happens, most people are not sure exactly why they are on the payroll. But if you are not crystal clear about why you are on the payroll and what results you have been hired to accomplish, it is very hard for you to perform at your best, get paid more, and get promoted faster.
* In simple terms, you have been hired to get specific results. A wage or a salary is a payment for a specific quality and quantity of work that can be combined with the work of others to create a product or service that customers are willing to pay for.
* Your job can be broken down into about five to seven key result areas, seldom more. These represent the results that you absolutely, positively have to get to fulfill your responsibilities and make your maximum contribution to your organization.
* A key result area is defined as something for which you are completely responsible. If you don’t do it, it doesn’t get done. A key result area is an activity that is under your control. It produces an output that becomes an input or a contributing factor to the work of others.
* Key result areas are similar to the vital functions of the body, such as those indicated by blood pressure, heart rate, respiratory rate, and brain-wave activity. An absence of any of these vital functions leads to the death of the organism. By the same token, your failure to perform in a critical result area of your work can lead to the end of your job as well.

***The Big Seven in Management and Sales***

* The key result areas of management are planning, organizing, staffing, delegating, supervising, measuring, and reporting. These are the areas in which a manager must get results to be successful in his or her area of responsibility. A weakness in any one of these areas can lead to underachievement and failure as a manager.
* The key result areas of sales are prospecting, building rapport and trust, identifying needs, presenting persuasively, answering objections, closing the sale, and getting resales and referrals.

***Clarity is Essential***

* The starting point of high performance is for you to identify the key result areas of your work.
* Discuss them with your boss. Make a list of your most important output responsibilities, and make sure that the people above you, on the same level, and below are in agreement with it.
* People’s ability to perform these tasks quickly and efficiently largely determines their pay and promotability.

***Give Yourself a Grade***

* Once you have determined your key result areas, the second step is for you to grade yourself on a scale of one to ten in each of those areas.
* Rule: **YOUR WEAKEST KEY RESULT AREA SETS THE HEIGHT AT WHICH YOU CAN USE ALL YOUR OTHER SKILLS AND ABILITIES.**
* This rule says that although you could be exceptional in all but one key result areas, poor performance in the one key result area will hold you back and determine how much you achieve with all your other skills. This weakness will act as a drag on your effectiveness and be a constant source of friction and frustration.

***Poor Performance Produce Procrastination***

* One of the major reasons for procrastination in the workplace is that people avoid jobs and activities in those areas where they have performed poorly in the past.
* Instead of setting a goal and making a plan to improve in a particular area, most people avoid that area altogether, which just makes the situation worse.
* The reverse of this is that the better you become in a particular skill area, the more motivated you will be to perform that function, the less you will procrastinate, and the more determined you will be to get the job done.
* The fact is that everybody has both strengths and weaknesses. Refuse to rationalize, justify, or defend your areas of weakness. Instead, identify them clearly. Set a goal and make a plan to become very good in each of those areas.
* Just think! You may be only one critical skill away from top performance at your job.

***The Great Question***

* What one skill, if I developed and did it in an excellent fashion, would have the greatest positive impact on my career? This is one of the greatest questions you will ever ask and answer.
* Look into yourself for the answer. Ask your boss this question. Ask your coworkers. Ask your friends and your family.
* Whatever the answer is, go to work to bring up your performance in this area. The good news is that all business skills are learnable.
* One of the fastest and best ways to stop procrastinating and get more things done faster is for you to become absolutely excellent in your key result areas.

**8 ∙ Apply the Law of Three**

* Three core tasks that you perform contain most of the value that you contribute to your business or organization. Your ability to accurately identify these three key tasks and then to focus on them most of the time is essential for you to perform at your best.

***One Thing All Day Long***

* Fully 90 percent of the value that you contribute to your company is contained in those three tasks, whatever they are. Everything else you do is either a support task or a complementary task that could probably be delegated, downsized, outsourced, or eliminated.
* Take immediate action.

***Transform Your Life***

* I doubled my income by focusing all my time and energy on my three key tasks.
* Focusing on keys tasks will transform your life. Perhaps the most important word in the world of work is contribution. Your rewards, both financial and emotional, will always be in direct proportion to your results, to the value of your contribution.
* If you want to increase your rewards, you must focus on increasing the value of what you do. You must dedicate yourself to contributing more results to your company. And three key tasks always contribute the most.

***The Quick List Method***

* In thirty seconds, write down your three most important goals in life right now.
* When people have only thirty seconds to write their three most important goals, their answers are as accurate as if they had thirty minutes or three hours.
* In 80 percent or more of cases, people have three goals in common: first, a financial, business, and career goal; second, a family or personal relationship goal; and third, a health or fitness goal.
* A more detailed set of three most important goals per target areas includes:
  + Business or career
  + Family or relationship
  + Financial
  + Health
  + Personal and professional development
  + Social and community
* Also addressing what your three biggest problems or concerns in life right now is critical.
* When you force yourself to ask and answer each of these questions in thirty seconds or less, you will be amazed at the answers. Whatever your answers, they will usually be an accurate snapshot of your true situation in life at that moment. These answers will tell you what is really important to you.
* While you are setting goals and priorities, getting organized, concentrating single-mindedly on one task at a time, and disciplining yourself to complete your most important tasks, you must never forget that your ultimate goal is to live a long, happy, and healthy life.

***Time Management is a Means to an End***

* The main reason to develop time management skills is so that you can complete everything that is really important in your work and free up more and more time to do the things in your personal life that give you the greatest happiness and satisfaction.
* Fully 85 percent of your happiness in life will come from happy relationships with other people, especially those closest to you, as well as members of your family.
* The purpose of time management – of eating that frog – and getting more done in less time is to enable you to spend more “face time” with the people you care about, doing the things that give you the greatest amount of joy in life.
* Rule: **IT IS THE QUALITY OF TIME AT WORK THAT COUNTS AND THE QUANTITY OF TIME AT HOME THAT MATTERS.**

***Work All the Time You Work***

* To keep your life in balance, you should resolve to work all the time you work. When you go to work, put your head down and work the whole time. Start a little earlier, stay a little later, and work a little harder.
* Time that you waste at work often has to be taken away from your family. You have to either stay late or take work home and work in the evenings. By not working effectively and efficiently during your workday, you create unnecessary stress and deprive the members of your family of the very best person you can possibly be.

***Balance Is Not Optional***

* One of the most famous sayings of the ancient Greeks is “Moderation in all things.”
* “How often does a tightrope walker balance when on the high wire?” – “All the time.” That is the situation with balance between work and home life. You have to do it all the time. You never reach a point where you have attained it perfectly. You have to work at it.

**9 ∙ Prepare Thoroughly Before You Begin**

* No matter what the level of your ability, you have more potential than you can ever develop in a lifetime.
* One of the best ways for you to overcome procrastination and get more things done faster is to have everything you need at hand before you begin.
* Begin by clearing off your desk or workspace so that you have only one task in front of you. If necessary, put everything else on the floor or on a table behind you.
* Gather all the information, reports, details, papers, and work materials that you will require to complete the job. Have them at hand so that you can reach them without getting up or moving around.
* Be sure that you have all the writing materials, log-in information, access codes, e-mail addresses, and everything else you need to start working and continue working until the job is done.
* Set up your work area so that it is comfortable, attractive, and conducive to working for long periods. Especially, make sure that you have a comfortable chair that supports your back and allows your feet to rest flat on the floor.

***Create a Comfortable Workspace***

* The most productive people take the time to create a work area where they enjoy spending time.
* The cleaner and neater you organize your work area before you begin, the easier it will be for you to get started and keep going.
* When everything is laid out neatly and in sequence, you will feel much more like getting on with the job.
* It is amazing how many books never get written, how many degrees never get completed, how many life-changing tasks never get started because people fail to take the first step of preparing everything in advance.

***Launch Toward Your Dreams***

* Once you have completed your preparations, it is essential that you launch immediately toward your goals. Get started. Do the first thing, whatever it is. “Get it 80 percent right and then correct it later.”
* Run it up the flagpole and see if anyone salutes. Don't expect perfection the first time or even the first few times. Be prepared to fail over and over before you get it right.
* Once you have completed your preparations, have the courage to take the first action, and everything else will follow from that.
* The way you develop the courage you need is to act as if you already had the courage and behave accordingly.

***Take the First Step***

* When you sit down with everything in front of you, ready to go, assume the body language of high performance.
* Sit up straight; sit forward and away from the back of the chair.
* Carry yourself as though you were an efficient, effective, high-performing personality.
* Then, pick up the first item and say to yourself, “Let's get to work!” and plunge in. And once you've started, keep going until the job is finished.

**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.
* 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.
* Lao-tzu wrote, “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***

* To counter the lack of features in the terrain, the French had marked the track with black, fifty-five gallon oil drums every five kilometers, which was exactly the distance to the horizon, formed by the curvature of the earth.
* Because of this, in the daytime, we could always see two oil barrels – the one we had just passed and the one five kilometers ahead of it. And that was exactly what we needed to stay on course.
* All we 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 be able to 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 this wonderful advice: “Leap – and the net will appear!”
* A great life or a great career is built by performing one task at a time, quickly and well, and then going on to the next task.
* You can overcome procrastination and accomplish extraordinary things by taking just the first step, getting started toward your goal, and then taking it one step, one oil barrel, at a time.

**11 ∙ Upgrade Your Key Skills**

* The only certain means of success is to render more and better service than is expected of you, no matter what your task may be.
* Upgrading your skills is one of the most important personal productivity principles of all.
* Learn what you need to learn so that you can do your work in an excellent fashion.
* The better you become at eating a particular type of frog, the more likely you are to just plunge in and get it done.
* A major reason for procrastination is a feeling of inadequacy, a lack of confidence, or an inability in a key area of a task.
* Continually upgrade your skills in your key result areas.
* Remember, however good you are today, your knowledge and skills are becoming obsolete at a rapid rate. “Anytime you stop striving to get better, you’re bound to get worse.” – Pat Riley

***Never Stop Learning***

* One of the most helpful of all time management techniques is for you to get better at your key tasks. Personal and professional improvement is one of the best time savers there is.
* When you know that you can do a job well, you find it easier to overcome procrastination and get the job done faster and better under any other circumstances.
* One piece of information or one additional skill can make an enormous difference in your ability to do the job well.
* Identify the most important things you do, and then make a plan to continually upgrade your skills in those areas.
* Rule: **CONTINUOUS LEARNING IS THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENT FOR SUCCESS IN ANY FIELD.**
* Refuse to allow a weakness or a lack of ability in any area to hold you back. Everything is learnable. And what others have learned, you can learn as well.
* The best news is that you can learn whatever skills you need to be more productive and more effective. You can acquire and improve any skill as soon as you decide to and make them a priority.

***Three Steps to Mastery***

* First, read in your field for at least one hour every day. Get up a little earlier in the morning and read for thirty to sixty minutes in a book or magazine that contains information that can help you be more effective and productive at what you do.
* Second, take every course and seminar available on the key skills that can help you. Attend the conventions and business meetings of your profession or occupation. Go to the sessions and workshops. Sit up front and take notes. Purchase the audio recordings of the programs. Dedicate yourself to becoming one of the most knowledgeable and competent people in your field.
* Third, listen to audio programs in your car. The average car owner sits behind the wheel 500 to 1,000 hours each year while commuting. Turn driving time into learning time. You can become one of the smartest, most capable, and highest paid people in your field simply by listening to educational audio programs during your commutes.
* The more you learn and know, the more confident and motivated you feel.
* The better you become, the more capable you will be of doing even more in your field.
* The more you learn, the more you can learn.
* Just as you can build your physical muscles through physical exercise, you can build your mental muscles with mental exercise.
* And there is no limit to how far or how fast you can advance except for the limits you place on your own imagination.

**12 ∙ Identify Your Key Constraints**

* Concentrate all your thoughts on the task at hand. The sun’s rays do not burn until brought to a focus.
* Between where you are today and any goal or objective that you want to accomplish, there is one major constraint that must be overcome before you can achieve that major goal. Your job is to identify it clearly.
* Whatever you have to do, there is always a limiting factor that determines how quickly and well you get it done. Your job is to study the task and identify the limiting factor or constraint within it. You must then focus all your energies on alleviating that single choke point.

***Identify the Limiting Factor***

* This constraint, or limiting factor, may be a person whose help or decision you need, a resource that you require, a weakness in some part of the organization, or something else. But the limiting factor is always there, and it is always your job to find it.
* The purpose of a business is to create and keep customers. By doing this in sufficient quantities, the company makes a profit and continues to grow and flourish.
  + Every business has a limiting factor or choke point that determines how quickly and well the company achieves this purpose.
  + It may be marketing, the level of sales, or the sales force itself. It may be the costs of operation or the methods of production. It may be the level of cash flow or costs.
  + The success of the company may be determined by the competition, the customers, or the current marketplace.
* One of these factors, more than anything else, determines how quickly the company achieves its goals of growth and profitability. What is it?
* The accurate identification of the limiting factor in any process and the focus on that factor can usually bring about more progress in a short period than any other single activity.

***The 80/20 Rule Applied to Constraints***

* 80 percent of the constraints, the factors that are holding you back from achieving your goals, are internal. They are within yourself – within your own personal qualities, abilities, habits, disciplines, or competencies. Or they are contained within your own company or organization.
* Only 20 percent of the limiting factors are external to you or to your organization. Only 20 percent are on the outside in the form of competition, markets, governments, or other organizations.
* Your key constraint can be something small and not particularly obvious. Sometimes you have to make a list of every step in a process and examine every activity to determine exactly what is holding you back.
* Sometimes a single negative perception or objection on the part of customers can be slowing down the entire sales process. Sometimes the absence of a single feature can be holding back the growth of sales of a product or service line.
* Look into your company honestly. Look within your boss, your coworkers, and members of your staff to see if there is a key weakness that is holding you or the company back, acting as a brake on the achievement of your key goals.

***Looking into Yourself***

* Successful people always begin the analysis of constraints by asking the question, “What is it in me that is holding me back?”
* They accept complete responsibility for their lives and look to themselves for both the cause and cure of their problems.
* In your own life, you must have the honesty to look deeply into yourself for the limiting factor or limiting skill that sets the speed at which you achieve your personal goals.
* Keep asking, “What sets the speed at which I get the results I want?”

***Strive for Accuracy***

* The definition of the constraint determines the strategy that you use to alleviate it. The failure to identify the correct constraint, or the identification of the wrong constraint, can lead you off in the wrong direction. You can end up solving the wrong problem.
* Behind every constraint or choke point, once it is located and alleviated successfully, you will find another constraint or limiting factor. Your job is to find them, one-by-one, and to focus your energies on alleviating them as quickly as possible.
* Starting off your day with the removal of a key bottleneck or constraint fills you with energy and personal power. It propels you into following through and completing the job.
* Often, alleviating the key constraint or limiting factor is the most important frog you could eat at that moment.

**13 ∙ Put the Pressure on Yourself**

* The first requisite for success is the ability to apply your physical and mental energies to one problem incessantly without growing weary.
* The world is full of people who are waiting for someone to come along and motivate them to be the kind of people they wish they could be. The problem is that no one is coming to the rescue.
* These people are waiting for a bus on a street where no buses pass. If they don’t take charge of their lives and put the pressure on themselves, they can end up waiting forever. And that is what most people do.
* Only about 2 percent of people can work entirely without supervision. We call these people “leaders.” This is the kind of person you are meant to be and that you can be, if you decide to be.
* To reach your full potential, you must form the habit of putting the pressure on yourself and not waiting for someone else to come along and do it for you. You must choose your own frogs and then make yourself eat them in their order of importance.

***Lead the Field***

* See yourself as a role model. Raise the bar on yourself. The standards you set for your own work and behavior should be higher than anyone else could set for you.
* Always look for ways to go the extra mile, to do more than you are paid for.
* Your self-esteem has been defined by psychologist Nathaniel Branden as “the reputation you have with yourself.” You build up or pull down your reputation with yourself with everything you do or fail to do.
* The good news is that you feel better about yourself whenever you push yourself to do your best. You increase your self-esteem whenever you go beyond the point where the average person would normally quit.

***Create Imaginary Deadlines***

* One of the best ways for you to overcome procrastination and get more things done faster is by working as though you had only one day to get your most important jobs done.
* If you had to leave town for a month, what would you make absolutely sure that you got done before you left? Whatever your answer, go to work on that task right now. What would you be determined to finish before you left? Whatever it is, start on that one job immediately.
* Successful people continually put the pressure on themselves to perform at high levels. Unsuccessful people have to be instructed and pressured by others.
* By putting the pressure on yourself, you will accomplish more tasks better and faster than ever. You will become a high-performance, high-achieving personality. You will feel terrific about yourself, and bit by bit you will build the habit of rapid task completion that will then go on to serve you all the days of your life.

**14 ∙ Motivate Yourself into Action**

* It is the compelling zest of high adventure and of victory, and of creative action that man finds his supreme joys.
* To perform at your best, you must become your own personal cheerleader. You must develop a routine of coaching yourself and encouraging yourself to play at the top of your game.
* It is not what happens to you but the way you interpret the things that are happening to you that determines how you feel. Your version of events largely determines whether these events motivate or de-motivate you, whether they energize or de-energize you.
* To keep yourself motivated, you must resolve to become a complete optimist. You must decide to respond positively to the words, actions, and reactions of the people and situations around you. You must refuse to let the unavoidable difficulties and setbacks of daily life affect your mood or emotions.

***Control Your Inner Dialogue***

* Your level of self-esteem, how much you like and respect yourself, is central to your levels of motivation and persistence. Your self-esteem is controlled by the positivity of your inner dialogue.
* Refuse to complain about your problems. Keep them to yourself.

***Develop a Positive Mental Attitude***

* Optimism is the most important quality you can develop for personal and professional success and happiness. Optimistic people seem to be more effective in almost every area of life.
* It turns out that optimists have four special behaviors, all learned through practice and repetition.
  + First, they look for the good in every situation.
  + Second, optimists always seek the valuable lesson in every setback or difficulty. Difficulties come not to obstruct but to instruct. They believe that each setback or obstacle contains a valuable lesson they can learn and grow from, and they are determined to find it.
  + Third, they always look for the solution to every problem. Instead of blaming or complaining when things go wrong, they become action oriented. “What’s the solution? What can we do now? What’s the next step?”
  + Fourth, they think and talk continually about their goals. They think and talk about the future and where they are going rather than the past and where they came from.
* When you continually visualize your goals and ideals and talk to yourself in a positive way, you feel more focused and energized. You feel more confident and creative. You experience a greater sense of control and personal power. And the more positive and motivated you feel, the more eager you will be to get started and the more determined you will be to keep going.

**15 ∙ Technology Is a Terrible Master**

* There is more to life than just increasing its speed.
* Technology can be your best friend or your worst enemy.
* Technology becomes the enemy when we give in to an obsessive need to communicate continually. This compulsion to stay plugged in leaves us all psychologically breathless. We have no time to stop, smell the roses, and collect our thoughts.

***You Have a Choice***

* The key is to keep your relationship with technology under control. Despite turning off all your devices, you will never miss an important message.
* For you to stay calm, clearheaded, and capable of performing at your best, detach on a regular basis from the technology that overwhelms you.
* A researcher who asked a group of CEOs and entrepreneurs to unplug from technology found they had improved memory, deeper relationships, better sleep, and a greater likelihood of making life-transforming decisions.
* When people are too plugged in, communications technology quickly becomes a destructive addiction.

***Take Back Your Time***

* The stress caused by undone tasks builds up like an avalanche overhang and quickly affects your personality, health, and sleeping habits.
* The 80/20 rule applies to technology and emails as well. You can delete and unsubscribe from 80 percent of your emails that have no value. Of the remaining 20 percent, 4 percent require immediate responses. The other 16 percent could be transferred to an action folder to be worked on later.

***Refuse to Be a Slave***

* Unchain yourself from your computer. Unsubscribe from all unwanted newsletters. Set up an autoresponder and auto-filer for your email.
* Although not many people would delete their entire in-box, you can definitely delete and ignore more e-mails than you do right now. Empower yourself to remove all e-mails that don’t relate to important goals and relationships.

***Someone Will Tell You***

* If it is really important, someone will tell you.
* Many people unplug from the news, and surprisingly enough, they remain well informed on most important subjects. You should do the same.

**16 ∙ Technology Is a Wonderful Servant**

* Technology is just a tool.
* You must discipline yourself to treat technology as a servant, not as a master.
* The purpose of technology is to make your life smoother and easier, not to create complexity, confusion, and stress.
* Use your technological tools to regularly remind yourself of what is important and protect yourself from what is least important.
* Technology can be a simple way to get control of your communications, your time, and even your emotions.

***Take Control of Your Communication***

* Clear your digital workspace as you would your physical desk. Close every program not needed for the task at hand.
* Block the websites that distract you the most.
* Make sure that only the communication channels you need to complete your task are open. Most tasks require some communication, but having ten different ways to communicate is overkill.
* Once only relevant information is visible on your screen, arrange your windows for perfect workflow.
* Show your smartphone who’s boss by disabling all notifications – both audio and visual. This is an important step toward checking your phone on your own schedule and thus regaining control of your life.

***But What about Emergencies?***

* You should not be available to everyone at all times. Rather, create a phone number, e-mail address, or other communication channel that only VIPs know about. Leave that channel open, and reserve it for emergencies.
* If you desire, you can do this for your work life as well.
* You could also program your e-mail manager to automatically sort e-mails from your most important work relationships into a “Read First” folder.
* In other words, segment your communication channels so that only frogs can hop into your castle of concentration.

***Take Control of Your Time***

* Your calendar makes a wonderful servant but a terrible master. Never automatically click Accept on a digital invitation. Ask yourself if the invitation really fits your priorities before pressing the Accept button.
* Schedule large blocks of time for task completion into your calendar, as if they were appointments. Be so aggressive about it that when people look at your calendar, they will see only a tiny slice of free time. This will impress and motivate them to schedule shorter meetings.
* Your digital to-do list, otherwise known as your task management software, is a powerful tool for taking control of your time.
* Digital to-do lists allow you to transfer items to another person’s to-do list at the click of a button. This can help you delegate more efficiently – but make sure you accept only those tasks that are in line with your priorities.
* A digital to-do list can also be programmed to remind you relentlessly about your most important tasks.

***Take Control of Your Emotions Using Technology***

* When you make technology your servant, it can be a source of positive, motivating emotions and increased productivity.
* Post your most important stretch goal on social media and promise your followers you will achieve that goal. Update them daily on your progress so that if you skip a day or slack off, everyone will know.
* You can even seek out people in your field on social media and compete with them to see who can eat the most frogs. For example, many novelists like to share their daily word counts on Twitter so they can see who in their social circle is the fastest and most productive writer – and who gives in to procrastination.
* Stop being enslaved by social media, and make it work for you instead. It’s simple: instead of posting something trite, post about your life goals and seek the social support to conquer them.

**17 ∙ Focus Your Attention**

* All of life is the study of attention; where your attention goes, your life follows.
* Focused attention is the key to high performance. The “attraction to distraction,” the lure of electronic and other interruptions, leads to diffused attention, a wandering mind, a lack of focus, and ultimately, underachievement and failure.
* Continuously responding and reacting to e-mails, telephone calls and texts, and instant messages has a negative effect on your brain, shortening your attention span and making it difficult, if not impossible, for you to complete the tasks upon which your future and your success depend.

***Developing an Addiction***

* When you start your day with a few shots of dopamine triggered by your e-mail or IM bell going off, you find it extremely difficult to pay close attention to your important tasks for the rest of the day.

***The Multitasking Illusion***

* Some people believe that they can engage in multitasking, going back and forth between e-mail and important tasks.
* But people can focus only on one thing at a time. What they are really doing is called “task shifting.” They are shifting their attention back and forth, like swinging a searchlight from one object to another.
* After an Internet interruption, it takes about seventeen minutes for you to shift your total attention back to your task and continue working. This is precisely why so many people are working harder and harder, shifting from e-mail interruptions to work and back again, all day long, and getting less and less accomplished. They also make more mistakes.

***The Proven Solutions***

* The solutions are simple and are being adopted by the most productive people in every industry.
* First, don’t check your e-mail in the morning and immediately trigger the all-day dopamine addiction. Leave your devices off.
* Second, if you must check your e-mail for any reason, get in and out fast, and get back to work. Turn off the sound on your computer and put your phone on vibrate. Stop the stimulation that trigger the flow of dopamine and lead to continuous interruptions.
* Finally, resolve to check your e-mail only twice a day, at 11AM and 3PM and then turn it off again each time. Provide a telephone number where someone can reach you in an emergency.
* Whenever you are in a meeting with one or more people, follow the same protocol. Leave electronic devices off. Never insult the persons you are meeting with by working on your laptop or answering your phone. Pay 100 percent attention to the other people. This applies to home as well.

***Double Your Productivity***

* Here is a simple way to double your productivity.
* First, plan each day in advance, select your most important task, and then start on that task first thing, before you do anything else.
* Second, work non-stop for ninety minutes with no diversion or distraction, and then give yourself a fifteen-minute break.
* Third, start again and work another ninety minutes flat out.
* Finally, after this three-hour work period, you can then reward yourself with a shot of dopamine by checking your e-mail.
* When you develop the habit of completing three hours of important work each morning, first thing, you will both double your productivity and break yourself of the habit of checking your e-mail all day long. You will regain full control of your life.

**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.
* 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, writing down every step in order, and then resolve to do just one slice of the job for the time being. Just like eating a roll of salami one slice at a time – or like eating an elephant one bit 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. Each small step forward energizes you. You soon develop an inner drive that motivates you to carry through to completion.
* 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 the next task or project and then to persist toward final completion.
* This act of completion triggers the release of endorphins in your brain. And the bigger the task you start and complete, the better and more elated you feel.

***“Swiss Cheese” Your Tasks***

* Another technique you can use is called the “Swiss cheese” method of working. You use this technique to get yourself into gear by resolving to punch a hole in 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 it. 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 that of 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 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 each technique is in overcoming procrastination.

**19 ∙ Create Large Chunks of Time**

* Nothing can add more power to your life than concentrating all of your energies on a limited set of targets.
* Most of the really important work you do requires large chunks of unbroken time to complete. Your ability to carve out and use these blocks of high-value, highly productive time is central to your ability to make significant contribution to your work and to your life.
  + Successful salespeople set aside a specific time each day to phone prospects. Rather than procrastinating or delaying on a task that they don’t particularly like, they resolve that they will phone for one solid hour and they discipline themselves to follow through on their resolution.
  + Many business executives set aside a specific time each day to call customers directly to get feedback, to return calls, or to answer correspondence.
  + Some people allocate specific 30 to 60 minutes each day for exercise. Many people read great books 15 minutes each night before retiring. In this way, over time, they eventually read dozens of the best books ever written.

***Schedule Blocks of Time***

* The key to success of this method of working in specific time segments is for you to plan your day in advance and schedule a fixed time period for a particular activity or task.
* Make work appointments with yourself and then discipline yourself to keep them. Set aside 30-,  
  60-, 90-minute time segments that you use to work on and complete important tasks.
* Many highly productive people schedule specific activities in preplanned time slots all day long. These people build their work lives around accomplishing key tasks one at a time. As a result, they become more and more productive and eventually produce two-, three-, five-times as much as the average person.
* Use a Time Planner
* During working times, turn off your phone, eliminate all distractions, and work non-stop.
* One of the best work habits of all is to get up early and work at home in the morning for two to three hours. You can get three times as much work done at home without interruptions as you ever could in a busy office where you are surrounded by people and bombarded by phone calls.

***Make Every Minute Count***

* When you fly on business, you can create your office in the air by planning your work thoroughly before you depart. When the plane takes off, you can work non-stop for the entire flight. You will be amazed at how much work you can go through when you work steadily in an airplane, without interruptions.
* One of the keys to high levels of performance and productivity is to make every minute count.
* Use travel and transition times, what are often called “gifts of time,” to complete small chunks of larger tasks.

**20 ∙ Develop a Sense of Urgency**

* Do not wait; the time will never be “just right.” Start where you stand, and work with whatever tools you may have at your command, and better tools will be found as you go along.
* Perhaps the most outwardly identifiable quality of high-performing men and women is action orientation.
* Highly productive people take the time to think, plan, and set priorities.
* They then launch quickly and strongly toward their goals and objectives. They work steadily, smoothly, and continuously.
* As a result, they seem to power through enormous amounts of work in the same amount of time that the average person spends socializing, wasting time, and working on low-value activities.

***Getting into “Flow”***

* When you work on your most important tasks at a high and continuous level of activity, you can actually enter into an amazing mental state called “flow.”
* Almost everyone has experienced this at some time. Really successful people are those who get themselves into this state far more often than the average person.
* When you’re in the state of flow, which is the highest human state of performance and productivity, something almost miraculous happens to your mind and emotions. You feel elated and clear. Everything you do seems effortless and accurate. You feel happy and energized. You experience a tremendous sense of calm and increased personal effectiveness.
* In the state of flow, identified and talked about over the centuries, you actually function on a higher plane of clarity, creativity, and competence.
  + You are more sensitive and aware. Your insight and intuition guide you and direct you to do and say exactly the right things at the right time.
  + You see the interconnectedness of people and circumstances around you. You often come up with brilliant ideas and insights that enable you to move ahead even more rapidly.

***Trigger High Performance in Yourself***

* One of the ways you can trigger this state of flow is by developing a sense of urgency. This is an inner drive and desire to get on with the job quickly and get it done fast.
* It is an impatience that motivates you to get going and to keep going. A sense of urgency feels very much like racing against yourself.
* With this ingrained sense of urgency, you develop a “bias for action.” You take action rather than talking continually about what you are going to do. You focus on specific steps you can take immediately. You concentrate on the things you can do right now to get the results you want and achieve the goals you desire.
* A fast tempo seems to go hand in hand with all great success. Developing this tempo requires that you start moving and keep moving at a steady rate. The faster you move, the more impelled you feel to do even more even faster. You enter “the zone.”

***Build Up a Sense of Momentum***

* When you regularly take continuous action toward your most important goals, you activate the Momentum Principle of Success. This principle says that although it may take tremendous amounts of energy to overcome inertia and get started initially, it then takes far less energy to keep going.
* The good news is that the faster you move, the more energy you have.
* The faster you move, the more you get done and the more effective you feel.
* The faster you move, the more experience you get and the more you learn.
* The faster you move, the more competent and capable you become at your work.
* A sense of urgency shifts you automatically onto the fast track in your career. The faster you work and the more you get done, the higher will be your levels of self-esteem, self-respect, and personal pride. You will feel in complete control of your life and your work.

***Do It Now!***

* One of the simplest and yet most powerful ways to get yourself started is to repeat the words “Do it now! Do it now! Do it now!” over and over to yourself.
* If you feel yourself slowing down or becoming distracted by conversations or low-value activities, repeat to yourself the words “Back to work! Back to work! Back to work!” over and over.
* In the final analysis, nothing will help you more in your career than for you to get the reputation for being the kind of person who gets important work done quickly and well. This reputation will make you one of the most valuable and respected people in your field.

**21 ∙ Single Handle Every Task**

* Herein lies the secret of true power. Learn, by constant practice, how to husband your resources, and to concentrate them at any given moment upon a given point.
* Eat the frog! Every bit of planning, prioritizing, and organizing comes down to this simple concept.
* Every great achievement of humankind has been preceded by a long period of hard, concentrated work until the job was done.
* Your ability to select your most important task, to begin it, and then to concentrate on it single-mindedly until it is complete is the key to high levels of performance and personal productivity.

***Once You Get Going, Keep Going***

* Single handling requires that once you begin, you keep working at the task without diversion or distraction until the job is 100 percent complete.
* You keep urging yourself onward by repeating the words “Back to work!” over and over whenever you are tempted to stop or do something else.
* By concentrating single-mindedly on your most important task, you can reduce the time required to complete it by 50 percent or more.
* It has been estimated that the tendency to start and stop a task – to pick it up, put it down, and come back to it – can increase the time necessary to complete the task by as much as 500 percent.
  + Each time you return to the task, you have to familiarize yourself with where you were when you stopped and what you still have to do.
  + You have to overcome inertia and get yourself going again.
  + You have to develop momentum and get into a productive work rhythm.
* But when you prepare thoroughly and then begin, refusing to stop or turn aside until the job is done, you develop energy, enthusiasm, and motivation. You get better and better and more productive. You work faster and more effectively.

***Don’t Waste Time***

* The truth is that once you have decided on your number one task, anything you do other than that is a relative waste of time. Any other activity is just not as valuable or as important as this job, based on your own priorities.
* The more you discipline yourself to working non-stop on a single task, the more you progress along the “efficiency curve.” You get more and more high-quality work done in less and less time.
* Each time you stop working, however, you break this cycle and move back along the curve to where every part of the task is more difficult and time consuming.

***Self-Discipline is the Key***

* Elbert Hubbard defined self-discipline as “the ability to make yourself do what you should do, when you should do it, whether you feel like it or not.”
* In the final analysis, success in any area requires tons of discipline. Self-discipline, self-mastery, and self-control are the basic building blocks of both character and high performance.
* Starting a high-priority task and persisting with that task until it is 100 percent complete is the true test of your character, your willpower, and your resolve.
* Persistence is actually self-discipline in action. The good news is that the more you discipline yourself to persist on a major task, the more you like and respect yourself, and the higher is your self-esteem. And the more you like and respect yourself, the easier it is for you to discipline yourself to persist even more.
* By focusing clearly on your most valuable task and concentrating single-mindedly until it is 100 percent complete, you actually shape and mold your own character. You become a superior person.
* You feel stronger, more competent, more confident, and happier. You feel more powerful and productive.
* You eventually feel capable of setting and achieving any goal. You become the master of your own destiny. You place yourself on an ascending spiral of personal effectiveness on which your future is absolutely guaranteed.
* And the key to all of this is for you to determine the most valuable and important thing you could possibly do at every single moment and then Eat That Frog!

**Conclusion**

**Putting It All Together**

* You can get control of your time and your life only by changing the way you think, work, and deal with the never-ending river of responsibilities that flows over you each day.

**Pontifications**

Coming from an unsuccessful background, I had developed deep feelings of inferiority and inadequacy. I had fallen into the mental trap of assuming that people who were doing better than me were actually better than me. What I learned was that this was not necessarily true. They were just doing things differently, and what they had learned to do, within reason, I could learn as well.

Every idea in this book is focused on increasing your overall levels of productivity, performance, and output and on making you more valuable in whatever you do.

All together, these twenty-one ideas represent a smorgasbord of personal effectiveness techniques that you can use at any time, in any order or sequence that makes sense to you at the moment.

These principles work to bring about fast, predictable improvements in performance and results. The faster you learn and apply them, the faster you will move ahead in your career-guaranteed!

This life-changing book will ensure that you get more of your important tasks done-today!

I have several friends who have become bestselling 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.

**June 2023 Goals**

* Template for Eat That Frog!
* Finish migration of par\_masterdata ETL and metadata to pcm data
* Finish Oil Barrel 1 of Marc’s Tableau Report
* Test Will’s monthly attribution report against pcm database
* Integrate Bloomberg Data Analyzer into Marc’s Tableau Report
* Read in its entirety “Operations and Supply Chain Management”
* Complete 4 DataCamp projects
* Complete 1/3 of Training the Street
* Read first four chapters of “Predicting Semiconductor Business Trends – After Moore’s Law”
* Read first 9 lessons of “Artificial Intelligence”
* Get in touch with Medha
* Priyank’s wedding email
* Passport renewal
* Kiddo’s contract
* Organize Fidelity finances
* Clean office
* Follow-up on estate planning checklist
* Long-term car rental
* Figure out what to do with Infiniti

**2023 Goals**

**Ad-Hoc Projects**

* Migration of SQL01 to SQL02 (completed)
* Marc’s Manager – Industry – Ticker level performance dashboard in Tableau (in progress)
* Bloomberg Data Analyzer (in progress)

**Code-Base Upgrade**

* Fully document all tech (SQL Server, R (Shiny), Python, and Excel) (in progress)
* Create new DB that will function as a single source for ops and analysis (in progress)
* Deprecate old SQL Server databases (par and par\_masterdata)
* Migrate then deprecate all T-SQL and SSIS based ETL and replace fully with Python
* Revisit front-end Shiny and Excel integration with back-end SQL Server

**Standard Reports**

* Ensure that efforts in code-base upgrade, Marc’s project, and Bloomberg Data Analyzer, support two general objectives:
  + Successful transition of standard reporting to Natalie and ability to develop LightKeeper quality assurance screens (see next two bullets)
  + Ability to develop new ad-hoc analysis and reporting
* Transition standard reporting to Natalie
  + Will’s Monthly Attribution report
  + Monthly YEP report
  + QCO Monthly Report
  + Charts and files for Quarterly Investor Update and Annual Memo
* Ensure that LightKeeper is current and high quality
  + Develop, monitor, and maintain quality assurance screens and resolution protocols
  + Catalog LK out-of-the-box analytics with current ad-hoc projects and standard reports

**Skill Upgrade**

* Upgrade skill-set related to data analysis and time-series forecasting
  + Work with Anuj on how analysis and forecasting can facilitate the data efforts he manages
* Upgrade skill-set related fundamental analysis
  + Complete Training the Street coursework
  + Prospect within PAR to see where skill-set can be useful
* Upgrade knowledge base in Artificial Intelligence and technology at a general level

**2023 Goals**

* Learn everything you can about the semiconductor industry and its business and economic drivers.
* Manage a Technology stock portfolio and utilizes stock selection combined with industry level hedging capability.
  + Fundamental Analysis
  + Time-series Forecasting
  + Portfolio Construction and Risk Management
* Moonlight with some sort of teaching gig.
* Eat That Frog!
* Better personal habits.
* Better communication habits.
* Better following-through on family and friends to-do lists.