

Title:

What One Thing?

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Summary:

A few weeks ago I asked my readers what the most important issue was in their business. Hundreds responded with a variety of answers, but one of the most common was, "How do I get everything that needs doing done?"

Happily, I have an answer for this question, but like many things in life, it carries both good news and bad news. The good news is, if you are one of those fortunate few with access to unlimited resources, you can get everything done.

But that's really the...

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Article Body:

A few weeks ago I asked my readers what the most important issue was in their business. Hundreds responded with a variety of answers, but one of the most common was, "How do I get everything that needs doing done?"

Happily, I have an answer for this question, but like many things in life, it carries both good news and bad news. The good news is, if you are one of those fortunate few with access to unlimited resources, you can get everything done.

But that's really the bad news, isn't it.

Because among all the people I know - not a single one of them -not one - has access to unlimited resources. Even executives I work with whose budgets run into the hundreds of millions - even they do not have unlimited resources. Even they have to make choices and trade-offs.

Earl Nightingale once asked the question, "What one thing would you do if you knew you could not fail?" And Jack Palance's Curly in City Slickers, asked a similar question: "What is the one thing?"

Their questions contains seeds of the answer to this quandary.

Because all things on your plate are not created equal. They are not all important. They do not all have the same impact, the same dependencies, the same possibility of reward.

And even if you think they do, upon close examination you'll find they do not.

The trick of course, is to figure out the one thing that matters most...

Right now...

And focus on that.

Of all the ideas I have sifted through in my role as an executive coach and business coach among the most relevant is the concept of sacrifice. My definition is giving up something of value for something of even greater value.

Sacrifice is the key. You have to let go of your attachment to most things on your plate, and figure out what things are of greatest value.

You don't get everything done, and you can't get everything important done. If you select well, and are willing to sacrifice the rest, you can get the most important things done. By letting go of the rest, everything essential, everything vital, everything earth-shattering can be done.

Can you imagine what life would be like if you only worked on things that were earth-shattering?

While this seems simple, obvious even, most of us have struggled with it all our lives.

You probably have trouble figuring out, from day to day, what is going to make the greatest difference. I'd be willing to bet that if you take a look, you probably can't even figure out what the criteria are.

So let's go back to Earl Nightingale's question: What one thing would do if you knew you could not fail?

Look at the things on your to-do list this way:

What will have the biggest impact?

What will yield the greatest revenues and profits?

What will open the doors to the future you desire?

What has the strongest possibility of success?

What has the largest reward to risk ratio?

What will give you the finest return on your investment?

What will free up the most time?

What will free up the most resources?

What will help you realize your success strategy?

And, what will bring you closest to your goals?

If you can first figure out which among these questions are most relevant for you, and answer them for all your projects, you can rank the things on your plate according to what matters most and is absolutely essential.

And once you do that, you can figure out which among all the various tasks you have should - no, must - get your attention.

THOSE ARE THE ONLY ONES YOU WORK ON.

Get those done, and if you have time left over, turn your attention to the next batch.

I call it strategic focus. Figuring out what's really going to rock your world. Figuring out what is really going to deliver the goods. And working on those things.

Only those things.

The rest of it will simply have to wait.

Maybe forever.

If you can wrap your mind around this one simple idea, figuring out what to do next becomes pretty easy. And because you are focusing your energies on few things instead of many, things get done.

Best regards,

Paul Lemberg

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