

When Arthur Guinness established his first brewery, he obviously had impressive ideas than making a few barrels of stout: he signed a 9,000-year contract on the building. Likewise, when J. K. Rowling thought of the concept of Harry Potter, she imagined seven books about life at Hogwarts before she wrote the first chapter of the first one.

Both Arthur and Rowling proceeded to be extremely successful, and this mostly because they were not scared of dreaming big: beginning with a grand dream of success before even starting to work toward achieving. It's difficult to envision that they would have accomplished such a huge success had they failed to dream really initially.

Still, for the majority of people, the thought of huge designs or huge successes is intimidating and has negative connections, like feeling overwhelmed and daunted. These negative feelings usually hinder people from thinking big.

When we do not think big and let these negative connections to control us, our thinking lessens and we reduce our trajectories. We vigorously restrict our likely success, condemning ourselves to mediocrity.

Think of science and how much of its advancements would have delayed if someone hadn't had the courage to think of formerly unimaginable potentials such as humans could breathe underwater, fly through the air or travel around space. History mentions us that we've done an oddly poor work of predicting our limits; therefore we should not allow the limits we see restrain our goals.

Success needs action, and action needs thought. However, in order to attain astonishing outcomes, our actions need to be based on big thinking at first.

Chapter 1 - Prioritize your to-dos – they are not all in the same way essential.

The majority of the people, from time to time, create “to-do” lists to track all the chores they need to finish. However, as soon as you make your list, how do you choose which tasks to work on first?

Do you begin with the ones that are very time-consuming, or get smaller jobs finished first? Perhaps you only do them in the rank they were written?

These methods fail to talk about a key issue: all items are not in the same way essential.

As a matter of fact, it is possible that just a few of them will have a deep effect, and so, these should be given the maximum priority.

This decision can be taken from the work of Joseph M. Juran, an innovator of quality-control management. While he was working for General Motors, he found out that common errors in their cars emanated from just a handful of production errors. It was obvious that mending these errors should be their greatest priority.

Juran called his discovery the Pareto Principle, which was named after an Italian economist, Vilfredo Pareto, who wrote a model for wealth and income distribution during the nineteenth-century in Italy. In the model, Pareto indicated that 80% of the land belonged to 20% of the people. Juran had seen that these amounts corresponded to his own: 80% of the defects emanated from only 20% of the errors.

Juran understood that this 80/20 principle may, as a matter of fact, be a universal law: 80% of your outcomes or outputs are constantly delivered by 20% of your work or inputs.

The consequences of this principle are obvious: the jobs on your to-do list are not in the same way essential; only a small amount of them will have the highest influence on your success. Prioritize your activities to concentrate on the ones that will accomplish the highest proportion of your outcomes.

Chapter 2 - Asking the “focusing question” will assist you to prioritize, make actionable tasks and accomplish your aims.

On the matter of success, Mark Twain once mentioned that,

“The secret of progressing is getting started. The secret of getting started is dividing your multifaceted overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks, and beginning on the first one.”

This is good advice; however, understanding where you want to go and what the first job should be to reach there can be hard. This mystery is precisely where it assists to ask the focusing question, a question precisely made to assist you to know both where you want to go and how you can get begin your journey:

“What’s the ONE thing I can do, such that by doing it every other thing will become easier or pointless?”

You can ask this question on two levels, each serving its own purpose:

The first one is on a macro level, the focusing question can assist you to realize the big picture and recognize your overall aim: the ONE thing you want to do and attain in life. For instance, here your ONE thing could be your general career aim.

The second one on a more practical, short-term level, the focusing question offers you a small focus to prioritize your direct choices and pick the most effective activity to start with. Here you are thinking of the ONE thing you can do presenting; for instance, “Make that phone call.”

The first level is about discovering the right path in life; the second is about selecting the right act.

Continuously asking yourself the focusing question will not just keep you targeted at your aim; however, it will also offer you actionable steps that develop on each other, making progress and drive. Keep asking it, and who knows what you can accomplish?

Chapter 3 - The key to a disciplined life is regular habit-forming.

When we deliberate on a person as successful as Bill Gates, we have a tendency to associate his extraordinary success to the remarkable self-discipline that enabled him to learn how to program computers in his early years. This level of discipline looks like an intimidating impossible goal. How do successful people keep such type of discipline?

On closer look, we understand that the key to their success is not very much to always use a tremendous amount of discipline for them to remain focused and ambitious; however, rather, to use discipline selectively to establish lasting good habits.

The success story of Michael Phelps is a clear illustration. He is generally respected for his focus and discipline; however, as a matter of fact, while he was a child, he was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. It was believed that he would never be able to concentrate on anything.

Therefore, how did he change things?

He directed the whole discipline he could gather into creating one habit: swimming daily. For nearly a decade –starting from the age of 14 through to the Beijing Olympics – he practiced seven days a week, 365 days a year.

One habit is only the beginning. Habits are very easy to keep than to start; therefore, as soon as something becomes a habit, you can change your discipline into creating a new one and then build them up sequentially. For instance, you could begin by going to the office 30 minutes earlier daily to empty your inbox before your coworkers get to work. As soon as this habit is formed, you can develop that by directing your discipline into remaining focused on one specific activity for longer times. As soon as this habit has been established, you can proceed to the next one.

Developing positive habits by selectively implementing discipline will offer you the ideas and advantages of a disciplined life, without the requirement for super-human discipline.

Chapter 4 - Multitasking is extremely inefficient: select a thing and give it your complete attention.

These days, it is commonly acknowledged that multitasking is an effective thing to do. We normally know the concept as meaning: to do two or more things at the same time. However, it was originally devised to explain a computer using a single processor to work on various tasks, interchanging hither and thither between them in fast succession. A difference which, as it occurs, is really revealing.

Although we can do some things simultaneously— for instance, walking and being on the phone talking – what we can't do is effectively concentrate on two different tasks all at once. This signifies that often, when we reason that we are multitasking, we are really shuffling two or more tasks, changing focus from one to the other one just like how a computer does.

Research has displayed that, for humans, those task-alternating demands a time penalty, as it requires time to change from one task and then refocus on another. This time cost may be little in the case of fairly easy tasks; however, it increases exceedingly when the task you are going back to is more difficult.

For instance, if you are working on a difficult spreadsheet and a colleague disturbs you to talk about a tricky business issue, time will be lost when you go back to the spreadsheet and find it hard to recall where you were in the process and what you were attempting to do.

During the day, these time costs quickly add up, specifically in the work surroundings. It has been calculated that, averagely, office workers are distracted every 11 minutes, and use close to a third of the working day recovering from these distractions. Can you truly bear to lose a third of your working day?

Understand what is more significant at the present and give your complete attention.

Chapter 5 - Your willpower is just like a fuel tank: carefully select where you use it or you may run out when you truly require it.

The majority of the people are painfully informed that they do not possess ironclad willpower. But, the surprising thing is that research has displayed that our willpower, far from being a regular resource, really drains at differing rates all through the day, according to the tasks we are doing.

For instance, our willpower is weakened when we make choices to concentrate our attention, repress our emotions or alter our actions in pursuit of a goal. When our willpower is drained, we are less capable to use it should more activities call upon this resource.

This would clarify the reason you may not be able to resist a delicious snack after a period of making hard choices or done a hard job.

Surrounding to a guilty pleasure is a thing; however, if you are making life and death choices when your willpower is low, the repercussions are possibly very more severe.

For prisoners, few choices are as essential as the decision at the next parole-board hearing. Could verdicts of such gravity be determined by something as arbitrary such as the time of day?

Research concerning Israeli parole judges displays that they could: judges were very likely to provide favorable verdicts at the beginning of a parole hearing than towards the end. The reason is that the judges had a tendency to depend on the default verdict of “no parole” as the day went by and their willpower became low. The rate of favorable verdicts increased again after breaks and a snack.

Full-strength willpower needs a full tank; therefore plan your day in order for you can to evade making important choices or judgments when you're running low.

Chapter 6 - Saying no to insignificant tasks is essential if you are to center your efforts on the most significant tasks.

Every one of us finds it hard at one time or another by saying no to needs since we want to be supportive. Assisting others can be extremely rewarding; however, for you to reserve your time and energy for your major goals, you have to say no to lower-priority needs.

Steve Jobs was famously as proud of the projects he didn't try as the ones he did. In 1997, when he went back to Apple, he decreased the company's production from 350 products to only ten. That's so much of no's. He mentioned at a developer's conference in 1997, that "When you ponder about concentrating, you think 'Well, concentrating is essentially about saying yes.' No! Concentrating is about saying no."

Telling people no constantly does not need to be as cold or as selfish as it may seem. You can constantly attempt to provide them another solution that doesn't need your help or redirect them to another person who can be more helpful.

Also, consider applying techniques that will reduce the requests you get; for instance, by telling the staff to refer to a list of commonly asked questions before coming to you. This may help; however, bear in mind that: sometimes you will still need to really say no to people down if you want to succeed.

With limited time and resources, you need to be ready to say no to unimportant tasks if you wish to concentrate your energy and get the most significant ones completed.

Chapter 7 - Living with purpose and thinking of the steps to attain your goal will put you on the path to extraordinary outcomes.

Visualize for a moment that you presently do not have any tangible goals or aspirations whatsoever. Adrift like this, how would you choose what to do every day? Do you think you would endure at a hard and tiresome task without understanding the reason you're doing it?

When we think of the above case, we understand how significant it is to have a goal to work towards achieving. It provides your life added meaning and purpose, which results in greater understanding in your thoughts, more belief in your actions, and faster choices. Most essentially, although, understanding the reason you're doing what you're doing gives inspiration and motivation when difficulty arises.

With a goal set in place, you can begin planning the steps to achieve it; however, it's even better to also think about each step as you proceed, because this motivation you and gets you ready for the road ahead. These useful results were displayed in a study of students, who, when taking a test, were asked to think about either the result of the test or the process of planning for and taking it. The students who thought of the process described higher levels of motivation, were more prepared and later on got better grades.

Remember the depiction of being really adrift at the beginning of this chapter? Now visualize that you have discovered your goal: you wish to climb Mount Everest. Your goal is abruptly known: it's the ONE thing you wish to do. Now you require some research, begin training and get the appropriate equipment. All thanks to your goal, you're already planning, thinking about the steps and progressing toward it.

Defining a goal – the ONE thing we wish to do and accomplish in life – is something we need all make every effort toward.

Chapter 8 - Do not sacrifice your personal life for your professional goals –rather, prioritize your work time ruthlessly.

Every one of us tries to get a balanced life – to share our time equally between everything that is important to us—however, we do this without stopping to question why, and what it is that we are really attempting to attain.

It's reasonable that we try for balance because each of our hassles in our work life and personal life looks really essential; however, as a matter of fact, this vision of a balanced life is unavailable and undesirable. If you attempt to do everything, you will eventually have short-changing everything you do, in both your personal and your professional life.

Author James Patterson summarized this predicament when he mentioned that: "think of life as a game in which you are juggling five balls. They are known as work, family, health, friends, and integrity. And you're trying to do several things at once. However, one day you eventually come to realize that the work ball is made of rubber – if you drop it, it will bounce back. The other four balls are made of glass."

As the quote shows, we should never compromise priorities in our personal life when the stress is on at work. The harm done may be irreversible. However, if our personal life usually takes priority, how can we prosper professionally?

The key is to prioritize your work time ruthlessly to concentrate on professional ambitions. In your personal life, ignoring any aspect can be dangerous; however, in your work life, you have your highest priority and every other thing is negotiable. From time to time, lesser priorities will need to be reduced, be delayed, or be done by someone else until what is actually important is done. This technique will let you concentrate on your most significant work, giving it the attention that is needed to attain great outcomes.

Chapter 9 - To concentrate on your ONE thing, you require effective time-management approaches, and to accept some disorder in other aspects.

Let's say you have found your ONE thing, the important priority you have to attain, and you have a clear strategy of the steps required to accomplish your goal.

You're ready to defeat the world; however, with just one small issue: life does not have a pause button. While you are working away, working on your masterpiece, the world does not calmly wait for you to complete it. Things accumulate. There will constantly be other people and projects that need your concentration.

Let's say you are working on getting a big contract. You'll have to make compromises. Your usual work is going to accumulate or be given to coworkers.

As the disorder piles up in other aspects, so does the pressure to deal with them. Learn to handle this by believing that the work you are doing on your top priority will prevail for you, and in doing that will make other aspects of your life easier. In a nutshell, let the disorder stack up.

Hence, now that you're concentrating on your ONE thing, how do you maximize your time?

Schedule blocks of time to work on your ONE thing, dedicate yourself to them and protect them like they are your most significant appointments. Also, you have to make sure that your physical surroundings don't hinder you from using this time well. Anywhere you work, you have to minimize likely distractions. Think of working far from your office if this is not possible.

Approaches like those let you give your ONE thing the focus it needs.

The ONE Thing: The Surprisingly Simple Truth Behind Extraordinary Results by Gary Keller, Jay Papasan Book Review

Success emanates from concentrating on ONE thing, not a lot of things. When working toward your ONE thing, evade the traps that hinder you from accomplishing success. Learn how to cut through the chaos and do your best work where it truly matters.

This book summary answered these questions:

How should I create goals and prioritize my work?

- Not thinking big can curb your opportunities.
- Prioritize your to-dos – they are not all in the same way significant.

- Asking the “focusing question” will assist you to prioritize, make actionable tasks and attain your goals.

How do I prevent being distracted from my ONE thing?

- The secret to a disciplined life is constant habit-forming.
- Multitasking is extremely inefficient: select a thing and give it your complete attention.
- Your willpower is just like a fuel tank: pick cautiously where you use it or you may run out when you truly require it.
- Saying “no” to irrelevant tasks is significant if you are to concentrate your efforts on the most essential ones.

How do I attain great outcomes in pursuing my ONE thing?

- Living with determination and visualizing the steps to attain your goal will put you on the route to extraordinary outcomes.
- Do not sacrifice your personal life for your professional goals –rather, prioritize your work time ruthlessly.
- To concentrate on your ONE thing, you have to make use of effective time-management approaches, and accept some chaos in other aspects.

Prioritize your to-do lists – If you wish to work much more effectively, know that not every task on your to-do list matters in the same way; some will offer a greater proportion of your outcomes than others. Keeping this mind, you need to always attempt to prioritize the ones that are possibly going to add more to your success and then work on these highest-priority tasks first.

Ask yourself the focusing question at the beginning of each day – Asking yourself the focusing question – “What’s the ONE thing I can do presenting so that by doing it, every other thing will

be easier or pointless?” – on a regular basis will assist keep you focused on your goal, assist you to prioritize your tasks, and make things easier in your life.

Quit multitasking – You cannot concentrate well on two or more things all at once. When we attempt to multi-task, what we are actually doing is alternating our focus between the tasks, which comes with a price. We are more likely to make errors and work less effectively. Choose what the most significant thing in the moment is, and give it your complete attention.

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