Stop Procrastinating!
Eat That Frog!

21 Great Ways to Stop Procrastinating and Get More Done in Less Time
Based upon the Book by Brian Tracy
By
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Bullitt County Public Schools
A little about me....

- BS-Elementary Ed, MA-Reading Specialist
- Principal and Superintendent Certifications
- Primary Teacher for 6 Years
- Elementary Assistant Principal for 4 Years
- Elementary Principal for 6 years
- BCPS Director of Human Resources for 10 years
- KASHRM President since September 2015
- Bellarmine University Adjunct Professor
- 34 years married, two children, three grandchildren
A little about BCPS...

- We have 23 schools in our district.
- We have approximately:
  - 900 certified staff members
  - 900 classified staff members
  - 500 certified substitute teachers
  - 200 classified substitutes
- We are located approximately twenty minutes from Louisville, Kentucky.
Introduction

- Most people are overwhelmed with too much to do and too little time.
- New tasks and responsibilities continue to roll in while you are struggling to get caught up, thus, you never get caught up!
- Your ability to select the most important task, get started on that task, and get it done quickly and well, will most likely have more of an impact on your success than any other quality or skill you can develop.
The Truth About Frogs

“Mark Twain once said that if the first thing you do each morning is to eat a live frog, you can go through the day with the satisfaction of knowing that that is probably the worst thing that is going to happen to you all day long.”

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.

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.
#1 ~ Set the Table

- #1 reason some people get more work done faster is because they are absolutely clear about their goals and objectives, and they don’t deviate from them.

- A great rule for success is to **Think on Paper**.

- Seven simple steps for setting and achieving goals:
  - #1 Decide exactly what you want.
  - #2 Write it down.
  - #3 Set a deadline on your goal.
  - #4 Make a list of everything that you can think of that you are going to have to do to achieve your goal.
  - #5 Organize the list into a plan.
  - #6 Take action on your plan immediately.
  - #7 Resolve to do something every single day that moves you toward your major goal.
#2 ~ Plan Every Day in Advance

- Eat your biggest, ugliest frog by breaking it down into specific, step-by-step pieces and get started with the first step!
- Every minute spent planning saves as many as ten minutes in execution.
- Planning is simple - you just need pen, paper, and a few minutes to make a list of your tasks to complete.
- Make your list the night before.
- Incomplete tasks should be moved forward to the next day.
- Write down new tasks that arise and check them off as you complete them.
- Master list - Monthly list - Weekly list - Daily list - check them off.
- Think on paper! Always work from a list. You’ll be amazed at how much easier it is to eat your frog!
#3 ~ Apply the 80/20 Rule to Everything

- 20% of our tasks account for 80% of our results.
- Often, one task on a list of ten tasks can be worth more than the other tasks combined. This task is the frog you should eat first.
- “Busy” people often work on low-value tasks while procrastinating on the one or two tasks, if completed quickly and well, could make a difference to their companies and to their careers.
- The most valuable tasks are often the hardest and most complex, but the rewards can be great. We must refuse to work on tasks in the bottom 80% while we still have the 20% to complete.
- Rule: Resist the temptation to clear up small tasks first.
- Don’t develop the habit of starting your day working on low-value tasks.
- Effective, productive people discipline themselves to begin with the most important task - they eat that frog!
#4 ~ Consider the Consequences

- How important is the task to you and to your company?
- Rule: Long-term thinking improves short-term decision making.
- Successful people have a clear future orientation.
- Before starting on any task, 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.
- Whatever your frog is, resolve to gulp it down first thing!
- Obey the law of forced efficiency ~ there will never be enough time to do everything, but there is always enough time to do the most important thing.
#5 ~ Practice Creative Procrastination

- Creative procrastination is the act of thoughtfully and deliberately deciding upon the exact things you are not going to do right now, if ever.
- Boardroom Reports said it best:
  
  *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.*

- You have to procrastinate on something, so make it the small, less ugly frogs. Eat the biggest and ugliest frogs before eating the tadpoles!
- Delegate or outsource tadpoles in order to focus on the frogs. Seriously, identify the tasks that you could delegate in order to free up more time for the work that really counts.
- One of the most powerful of all words in time management is the word **no**! Say it clearly. Say it regularly. Say it to anything that is not a high-value use of your time. Say it graciously but firmly. If you say yes to a new task, so no to an old task.
- Challenge: Select at least one activity/task to abandon immediately or at least deliberately put off until your more important goals have been achieved.
This is a powerful priority-setting technique you can use every day.

Begin with a list of everything you have to do for the coming day - think on paper.

An “A” item is something you **must** do such as finishing a report that your Superintendent needs for an upcoming board meeting. These are your frogs!

If you have more than one frog, you prioritize them by writing “A-1” then “A-2” and so on in front of each frog. Your “A-1” task is your biggest, ugliest frog of all.

A “B” item is something you **should** do such as returning an unimportant phone call. Never do a “B” task when an “A” task is left undone.
ABCDE Method

- A “C” task is something that would be nice to do but has no consequences at all, whether you do it or not. Phoning a friend or having lunch with a coworker is a “C” task.

- A “D” task is something you can delegate to someone.

- An “E” task is something that you can eliminate altogether and it won’t make any real difference.

- Discipline yourself to start immediately on your “A-1” task and stay at it until it is complete. Eat the whole frog and don’t stop until it is finished.

- When you develop the habit of concentrating on your biggest frog, you will start getting more done than any two or three people around you.

- Practice this ABCDE Method every day for the next month. After a month, you will have developed the habit of setting and working on your highest-priority tasks!
#7 ~ Focus on Key Result Areas

- Why am I on the payroll?
- 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.
- The starting point of high performance is for you to identify the key result areas of your work and discuss them with your boss.
- Hiring the right people and delegating effectively are both key result areas.
- 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. Where are you strong and where are you weak?
- Poor delegation skills alone can lead to failure in the job.
- 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. Focus on improving in that area to become a better you.
- What one skill, if I developed and did it in an excellent fashion, would have the greatest positive impact on my career? Ask your boss. Ask your coworkers. Find out and work to bring up your performance in this area.
- One of the fastest and best ways to stop procrastinating and to accomplish more faster is for you to become absolutely excellent in your key result areas.
Three core tasks that you perform contain most of the value that you contribute to your 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.

If you could do only one thing on your list of three all day long, which one task would contribute the greatest value to your company? Second? Third?

90% of the value that you contribute to your organization is contained in those three tasks.

Rule: It is the quality of time at work that counts and the quantity of time at home that matters.

To keep your life in balance, you should resolve to work all the time you work. Time that you waste at work often has to be taken away from the members of your family.
One of the best ways to overcome procrastination and to get more things completed quicker is to have everything you need at hand before you begin.

1. Clear off your desk so that you have only one task in front of you.
2. Gather all information, reports, and papers required to complete the job.
3. Now that you are prepared, get started! Do the first thing and don’t stop until the job is finished.

Take a look at your desk/office. The cleaner and neater your work environment, the more positive, productive, and confident you feel.
#10 ~ Take It One Oil Barrel at a Time

- “By the yard it’s hard; but inch by inch, anything’s a cinch!”
- One of the best ways to eat a large frog is for you to take it one bite at a time.
- Crossing the Sahara Desert is completed by watching for the next oil barrel. They are found every five kilometers to mark the way, thus, crossing the biggest desert in the world by simply taking it “one oil barrel at a time” - author Brian Tracy.
- A great career is built by performing one task at a time, quickly and well, and then going on to the next task.
#11 ~ Upgrade Your Key Skills

- Upgrading your skills is one of the most important personal productivity principles of all.
- Getting better at your key tasks will improve your time management.
- Three steps to mastery:
  1. Read in your field for at least one hour every day.
  2. Take every course and seminar available on the key skills that can help you. Sit up front and take notes. Dedicate yourself to becoming one of the most knowledgeable and competent people in your field.
  3. Listen to audio programs in your car. Turn driving time into learning time.
#12 ~ Leverage Your Special Talents

- Identify your special areas of uniqueness and then commit yourself to becoming very good in those areas.
- What do you do easily and well that is difficult for other people?
- Successful people are invariably those who have taken the time to identify what they do well and most enjoy. They then concentrate on that task or area of activity exclusively.
- You cannot do everything, but you can do those few things in which you excel, the few things that can really make a difference.
#13 ~ Identify Your Key Constraints

- What stops you or holds you back from eating the frogs that can really make a difference?
- 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 and then focus all of your energies on alleviating the single choke point.
- For example, this constraint 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.
- The 80/20 Rule applies to constraints in your work. 80% of the constraints are internal, within you or within your organization. Only 20% are external to you or your organization.
- Successful people always begin the analysis of constraints by asking, “What is it in me that is holding me back?” Work to determine the constraint and work to alleviate it.
Only about 2% of people can work entirely without supervision. These people are called leaders.

To reach your full potential, you must put pressure on yourself and not wait for someone else to put the pressure on you.

You must choose your own frogs and then make yourself eat them in their order of importance.

See yourself as a role model for others. Set your work standards higher than anyone else could set for you.

Your self-esteem can be described as the reputation you have with yourself.

You increase your self-esteem whenever you go beyond the point where the average person would normally quit.

One of the best ways to overcome procrastination is by working as though you only have one day to get your most important jobs completed.

Successful people continually put pressure on themselves to perform at high levels.
#15 ~ Maximize Your Personal Powers

- Your productivity begins to decline after eight or nine hours of work.
- There are specific times during the day when you are at your best. Identify these times and discipline yourself to use them on your most important and challenging tasks.
- One of the smartest things you can do is to turn off the television and get to bed by 10:00 each night during the week.
- Take one full day off every week. Whether it be Saturday or Sunday, absolutely refuse to read emails, catch up on things from the office, or do anything that taxes your brain. This allows your brain to completely recharge itself.
- Take regular vacations each year, both long weekends and one or two week breaks to rest and rejuvenate.
- Be careful about what you eat.
- Exercise about 200 minutes each week.
- Take care of you!
To perform at your best, you must become your own personal cheerleader.

To keep yourself motivated, you must resolve to become a complete optimist.

No matter how you really feel at the moment or what is happening in your life, resolve to remain cheerful and upbeat.

Refuse to complain about your problems. Keep them to yourself.

Optimistic people seem to be more effective in almost every area of life.

Optimists have four special behaviors:

1. They look for the good in every situation.
2. They seek the valuable lesson in every setback or difficulty.
3. They always look for the solution to every problem.
4. They think and talk continually about their goals.
#17 ~ Get out of the Technological Time Sinks

- Technology can be your best friend or your worst enemy.
- For you to stay calm, clearheaded, and capable of performing at your best, you need to detach on a regular basis from the technology and communication devices that can overwhelm you.
- Avoid becoming addicted to the use of communications technology.
- Delete emails of no value without even opening them.
- Delegate the task of sorting through your emails to a secretary so that the only emails you read are truly important leaving you more time to eat the important frogs in your work life.
- Treat technology as a servant, not as a master. It is there to help you, not to hinder you.
- One of the best rules for dealing with technology is to just “leave it off.” Resist the urge to start turning on communication devices as soon as you wake up in the morning.
- Leave your computer off until you have planned and organized your day.
- Create zones of silence in your life where you can think and work.
- If you are out of touch for a while, problems get solved, answers get found, and work gets done.
#18 ~ Slice and Dice the Task

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

- One technique to cut a big task down to size is the “salami slice” method which is simply resolving to do just one slice of the job for the time being.

- Psychologically, you will find it easier to do a single, small piece of a large project than to start on the whole job. Once you have started and completed a single piece of the job, you will feel like doing just one more slice, and the job will be completed before you know it.

- Another technique is the “Swiss cheese” method which is setting a specific time period to work on the project. This may be as little as five or ten minutes, but you will feel rewarded for having taken one bite of your frog before moving on to something else.

- Remember, deep within us is an “urge to completion” which is often referred to as a “compulsion to closure.” This act of completion triggers the release of endorphins in your brain and the bigger the frog you eat, the greater the surge of personal power and energy you experience.
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 highly productive time is key to your success. Plan your day in advance and schedule a fixed time period for a particular task. Make a work appointment with yourself and keep it! Set aside 30, 60, and 90 minute time segments that you use to work on and complete important tasks (Big Frogs!). Use a time planner to create blocks of time for concentrated work. During these chunks of time, turn off the telephone, eliminate all distractions, and work nonstop. Make every minute count.
Highly productive people take the time to think, plan, and set priorities. They then launch quickly and strongly toward their goals and objectives.

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.”

When you’re in the state of flow, 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, you actually function on a higher plane of clarity, creativity, and competence.

One way to trigger this state of flow is by developing a sense of urgency. This is an inner drive to get on with the job quickly and get it done fast. Take action rather than talking about what you are going to do.

Build the reputation for being the kind of person who gets important work done quickly and well.
#21 ~ Single Handle Every Task

- Eat that frog! This is the simple concept behind planning, prioritizing, and organizing your work.

- Single handling requires that once you begin, you keep working at the task without diversion or distraction until the job is 100% complete.

- By concentrating single-mindedly on your most important task, you can reduce the time required to complete it by 50% or more.

- Don’t waste time.

- The more you discipline yourself to working nonstop 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, you break this cycle and move back along the curve to where every part of the task is more difficult and time consuming.

- The key 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

- The key to happiness, satisfaction, great success, and a wonderful feeling of personal power and effectiveness is for you to develop the habit of eating your frog first thing every day when you start work.

- This is a learnable skill that you can acquire through repetition.

- So, go *Eat That Frog!* 😊
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- Please feel free to contact me if I may be of any assistance to you.
- 502-869-8002
- Thank you!

► Eat That Frog!