



## Eat That Frog

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

by Brian Tracy  
Berrett-Koehler © 2001  
96 pages

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### Take-Aways

- If you want to gain control of your life, change the way you work.
- Action is the key to accomplishment.
- People who do better do things differently. They do the right things right.
- Eating the frog means identifying your most important task and tackling it with single-minded focus until it is completed.
- Launch directly into your most important tasks.
- Your ability to focus on your most important task will determine your success.
- People fail because they aren't absolutely clear about their goals.
- The best rule for success is to think on paper. Write down your goals.
- Every night, make a list of what you want to accomplish the next day. Have a master list, a monthly list, a weekly list and a daily list.
- Identify the one skill that, if you developed it, would have the biggest impact on your career.

### Rating (10 is best)

Overall	Applicability	Innovation	Style
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>

## Relevance

### What You Will Learn

In this Abstract you will learn: 1) Time-management techniques that will make you more effective in achieving personal and professional goals; 2) Task prioritization methods that will make you more efficient, and 3) How to adopt these tools into lifelong habits.

### Recommendation

We all have our frogs — important tasks that we’ve put off for whatever reason. The key to success is to eat your frogs quickly, completely and with focused determination. So says Brian Tracy, the master of hard-nosed time management. You’ll find no touchy-feely personal development pabulum here. The message of this book: Action leads to accomplishment. With that simple rule in mind, Tracy rolls out tools and techniques that will get you off your backside and into motion. *getAbstract.com*, while unearguing to take up noshing on amphibians (well, maybe just the legs, in plenty of garlic butter), strongly recommends this book to anyone caught in the swamp of procrastination.

## Abstract

### Amphibian on Toast

If you eat a live frog each morning you will know that you have already experienced the worst thing that will happen to you that day. You probably have frogs hidden on your desk and on your to-do lists. Your frogs are the tasks that you know are priorities, but that you’ve put on the back burner for whatever reason. It’s time to learn how to snack on those difficult problems. The good news is — it’s a high-protein diet.

OK, you don’t need to eat real frogs to be a success in business. But you do need to tackle critical projects and problems creatively and effectively. Here’s a plain and simple truth: The ability to focus in a single-minded fashion to accomplish the most important task before you is the prime determinant of your success. It’s that clear. The complication comes in, however, when you lack clarity about your true goals and objectives.

Lack of clarity can be a killer, because it impairs action, and action is the secret to success. Like everyone, you probably feel overwhelmed at times with too much to do and not enough time to get it all done. Select the most important challenge — that big, old frog slobbering in your in-basket — and address it effectively. Successful people launch directly without hesitation into the major task that confronts them at any point in the day. How do you develop this clarity? Well, it’s impossible without developing good work habits. Indeed, about 95% of your success in life will depend on the habits you cultivate. Good habits will be your best friends and bad ones will be your worst enemies.

### Winning is a Habit

You require three qualities to develop successful habits. You will need to make choices. You will need discipline and you will need determination. For example, one essential habit is learning to think on paper. Would you be surprised to learn that only about 3% of adults have bothered to put their goals on paper? Here’s how you can get what you want out of life:

- Decide precisely what you want.
- Write this goal down.

“An average person who develops the habit of setting clear priorities and getting important tasks completed quickly will run circles around a genius who talks a lot and makes wonderful plans but gets very little done.”

“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.”

“Simply put, some people are doing better than others because they do certain things differently and they do the right things right.”

“The key to success is action.”

“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.”

- Set a deadline by which you plan to achieve it.
- List what you will need to do to achieve your goal.
- Turn the list into a plan. Organize it by priority and sequence.
- Take action immediately. Do anything, but don't hesitate.
- Promise yourself to make some small step toward your goal each and every day.

After that, it's mostly a matter of continuing to push forward until you attain your goal. While acting is better than procrastinating, action without planning leads to failure and disappointment, so learn to plan daily. Always work from a list. Draft your list the night before work so your subconscious mind will work on it all night long while you sleep. Create different lists for different purposes. Have a master list. Create a list for the coming month at the end of each month, make a weekly list in advance for the coming week and, of course, you need a daily list. Remember the 10/90 rule: investing 10% of your time in planning before beginning a project will help you use the other 90% of the time more effectively.

### **Time-Management, Pareto Style**

In 1895, Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto realized that 20% of people made 80% of the money, while 80% of the people had little money. He soon discovered that this ratio applied to all economic activity. The top 20% of your activities will generate 80% of your profits. Twenty percent of your customers will account for 80% of your sales. This pervasive fact is now known as Pareto's Rule. The rule means that if you have a to-do list of 10 items, two of those items will generate 80% of the return you get from your entire list. Now, when you look at your list, you will be tempted, of course, to clear up a few small things first so you can check them off and have a sense of accomplishment. However, those items may not be significant to your economic activity. And that's a problem.

What to do? Well, remember that the hardest part of any task is getting started. Time management is really just taking control of the sequence of events that affect your life. Effective people discipline themselves to address the most important task first, always. That is, they discipline themselves to eat that frog. Ummmmmmmm, good!

### **Long-Term Thinking**

To succeed, think for the long term. Before you begin a project, ask yourself, “What is the consequence of not doing this task?” Be willing to delay short-term gratification in order to achieve better long-term results. Of course, reconsider if taking on a task causes you more trouble in the long run. As motivational speaker Dennis Waitley puts it, “Failures do what is tension-relieving while winners do what is goal-achieving.” Keep in mind, the root word for motivation is motive. To succeed, you must give yourself a motive for the choices you make.

### **The ABCs of Success**

Is success really as simple as ABC? Well, no. You have to add a “D” and “E” as well. Use the ABCDE method as a powerful tool for establishing your daily priorities. Here's how it works:

- Make your list.
- Place an A, B, C, D or E before each item on that list.
- Complete the tasks in alphabetical order.

An “A” task is one that you must do as soon as possible or face serious consequences. “B” items are tasks you should do, but ones that carry mild consequences. A “C” task would

“Many people confuse activity with accomplishment.”

“Clarity is the most important concept in personal productivity.”

“Clearly written goals have a wonderful effect on your thinking. They motivate you and galvanize you into action.”

be nice to do, but carries absolutely no consequences at all. A “D” task is something you can delegate to someone else, so your goal is to delegate all of them to free your time for things only you can do. An “E” task is one you can eliminate altogether. It may have seemed important once, but it isn’t any more. Yes, you may have more than one “A” task. That’s fine. Simply number them sequentially...A-1, A-2, A-3 and so forth. Practice the ABCDE method daily, and you will be surprised by its positive impact on your work life.

### Key Result Areas

To become more effective, ask yourself why you’re on the payroll. Most people aren’t sure. Obviously, you have been hired to get results. Most jobs have key results, specific things that must be done. To improve your performance, identify your job’s key result areas. Here, for example, are the key result areas for a salesperson at a typical organization:

- Prospecting.
- Making presentations.
- Closing business.
- Sales service for existing accounts.
- Administrative duties and paperwork.

Identify your key result areas and make sure you allocate the appropriate resources to handle them. Then, grade yourself in each key result area. Your weakest performing key result area defines the ceiling of your performance of your other skills (a manager who cannot delegate will find that impairs his or her ability to move forward in other skills). Your weakest key result area is an anchor that keeps you from sailing on with your other skills and assets.

However, if you improve your weakest key result area, you will improve your overall performance. Everyone has weaknesses. Identify yours and strengthen them. Ask yourself, “What is the one skill area I could improve that would have the greatest impact on my career?” Becoming more computer savvy? Learning a new language? All business skills are learnable, simply target the area in which you need improvement and move forward.

### The Law of Forced Efficiency

You probably don’t like the idea of forcing things. The Law of Forced Efficiency relates to the idea that any job will expand to fill the time you allow for it. If you have two days, it will take you two days (or perhaps more). However, the flip side is also true: If you have only one day to complete a two-day job, somehow you find the time to do it. One corollary to the Law of Forced Efficiency is the realization that you will simply never have enough time to do everything you want to do. To cope with this sad circumstance, continually ask yourself:

- What is my highest value activity?
- What is it that only I can do that, if done well, will have a significant impact?
- What is the highest and best use of my time, right now?

The answers to these questions will help you to manage your time. As Goethe said, “The things that matter most must never be at the mercy of the things that matter least.”

### Identify Your Key Constraints

You have goals and you haven’t achieved them yet. So what is holding you back? Answering that question can be a critical building block for a more successful tomorrow.

“The hardest part of any important task is getting started on it in the first place.”

“Time management is really life management.”

In fact, you must determine the answer. Constraints always affect the completion of a job. Identify these limiting factors, your key constraints, and the rest of your work will go much more smoothly. If you can resolve your choke point, you can make every other process flow more naturally. The 80-20 rule applies: 80% of your problems will stem from 20% of the obstacles you face. So which ones should you concentrate on? Ask, “What within me is holding me back?” Don’t blame someone else. Take responsibility and determine what you need to do to improve.

### **Becoming Your Own Cheerleader**

Change is always a challenge; to meet the challenge of becoming more effective, you need support from the world’s greatest cheerleader — you! So grab your pom-poms and remember:

- Become an eternal optimist — When you really rely on yourself, you no longer have the luxury of moping, feeling sorry for yourself or copping an attitude. Respond positively to other people’s behaviors, words and actions. Steer a steady course, unaffected by the countless, maddening, trivial setbacks of daily life.
- Always talk to yourself positively — Say things like, “I like myself” over and over, creating positive affirmations that become self-fulfilling prophecies.
- Resolve to remain cheerful and upbeat — Optimists look for the good in any situation, search for the lesson and believe difficulties come not to obstruct, but to instruct.
- Visualize your goals — Imagine yourself sitting in that corner office.

Eating the frog means having the positive attitude and the will to do the most difficult task first. Because you can’t do everything, indulge in creative procrastination — put off the things that do not carry a consequence. Break large tasks down into a series of simple ones. Work with a sense of urgency. And remember that all you have to do to succeed in business and in life is learn to eat that frog every day.

## **About The Author**

Brian Tracy talks to about 250,000 people each year about personal and professional development. His careers ranged from sales and marketing to investments and real estate development prior to founding his own firm, Brian Tracy International. He is the author of *Get Paid More and Promoted Faster*, *Maximum Achievement* and other books, as well as numerous best-selling audiocassette programs, including *How to Start and Succeed in Your Own Business*.

## **Buzz-Words**

ABCDE method / Creative procrastination / **Key** result areas / **Pareto’s** rule / **Rule** of forced efficiency