



Book Review

Eat That Frog – A Book Review

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Title: “Eat That Frog, 21 Great Ways to Stop Procrastinating” (3rd Edition)

Author: Brian Tracy

Published by: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc. Place of publication: California, USA

Year: 2017

Number of Pages: 119

Audience: The book is relevant for management students, professionals, executives, working or non-working people, and anyone who wants to be more productive and wishes to stop procrastination.

Abstract

This book is about time management and recommends many practical tips for managing time efficiently, as trying to do everything is neither desirable nor feasible. For tackling the most challenging task of one’s day, the metaphor, ‘eat that frog’, has been used. The most critical task brings in procrastination, hence addressing that task early in the day helps increase productivity by arranging the rest of the day in a systematic manner. The key to success lies in focusing on priority jobs. The basic idea of the book narrates that the work which demands attention, one should take action for it and develop habits of success namely, determination, discipline, and decision. It has been advised to practice 21 principles which have been mentioned in the book as a separate chapter for each principle, over and over until they become automatic, so as to discipline oneself. To achieve success in life, the book suggests that one should focus and determine one most important task and complete it each day before drawing attention to other not-so-critical tasks.

Keywords: procrastination, challenges, time management, systematic, success, discipline, productivity

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About The Author: Brian Tracy

Brian Tracy is a Canadian-American acclaimed motivational public speaker and self-development author. He is one of the top business speakers acknowledged globally. More than 80 books have been authored by him that have been translated into 42 languages. Several books authored by him include ‘Kiss That Frog’, ‘The Psychology of Achievement’, ‘Find Your Balance Point’, ‘Goals’, ‘The Power of Self- Discipline’, ‘Flight Plan’, ‘Earn What You’re Really Worth’, ‘No Excuses’, and ‘How the Best Leaders Lead’. Brian has produced more than 500 audio and video learning programs on management, sales, personal development and business success so as to help people and businesses achieve their aims faster,

and in an easy way. He has designed and presented seminars for more than 1,000 large companies and more than 10,000 small and medium-sized enterprises in 75 countries on the subjects of management, business model reinvention, leadership, professional selling, and profit improvement. His entertaining, fast-moving, video-based training programs are taught in 38 countries.

Brian Tracy was born in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Canada on 5 January 1944. For education, he went to the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Alberta. He established a company Brian Tracy International, in 1984 in Vancouver, British Columbia, and holds the position of chairman and chief executive officer (CEO) in it. He lives in Solana Beach, California and is the president of Brian Tracy International. The company provides counseling on leadership, self-esteem, selling, creativity, goals, strategy, and success psychology. Before founding his company, Brian Tracy International, Brian was the Chief Operating Officer of a 265-million-dollar development company. He has had successful careers in management consulting, sales and marketing, investments, and syndication, distribution, importation, and real estate development.

Introducing The Book

The title of the book, “Eat That Frog” comes from the iconic quote of the American writer Mark Twain: “Eat a live frog first thing in the morning, and nothing worse will happen to you the rest of the day.” This relates to the most critical task which needs to be handled first thing at the beginning of the day. It is advised that tasks that make a difference should be tackled on priority. Tracy mentions 21 methods in the book to improve productivity after doing research on other people’s work. These 21 techniques will assist to “eat your frog”, and go ahead. The popularity of the book and the practical tips suggested is evident as the book seems to have sold more than 1.6 million copies, translated into 42 languages.

Contents

The book opens with ‘Introduction’, expressing the first rule of frog eating – ‘If you have to eat two frogs, eat the ugliest one first’. The second rule states – ‘If you have to eat a live frog at all, it doesn’t pay to sit and look at it for very long’.

The book has 21 chapters in which the portrayal of all 21 ideas is discussed with examples. The contents of the book are cited below:

- Introduction: Eat that Frog
- Set the Table
- Plan Every Day in Advance
- Apply the 80/20 Rule to Everything
- Consider the Consequences
- Practice Creative Procrastination
- Use the ABCDE Method Continually
- Focus on Key Result Areas
- Apply the Law of Three
- Prepare Thoroughly Before You Begin
- Take it One Oil Barrel at a Time
- Upgrade Your Key Skills
- Identify Your Key Constraints
- Put the Pressure on Yourself
- Motivate Yourself into Action
- Technology is a Terrible Master
- Technology is a Wonderful Servant

- Slice and Dice the Task
- Create Large Chunks of Time
- Develop a Sense of Urgency
- Single Handle Every Task Conclusion
- Notes

A Brief Description of Each Chapter:

- **Set the Table:** The author, in this chapter, asks the readers to decide on what they want, then write it on a paper with a deadline and initiate action.
- **Plan Every Day in Advance:** The Six-P Formula – ‘Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance’. The author suggests to make a monthly, weekly and a daily list of tasks to be completed. The 10/90 rule where 10% time is spent in planning and 90% in getting the work done.
- **Apply the 80/20 Rule:** This is spending more time on a few tasks (20%) which have a bigger impact (80%) and make a difference.
- **Consider the Consequences:** The author says that one should ask ‘What are the potential consequences of doing or not doing this task?’ thinking about the consequences of actions is important to set priorities.
- **Practice Creative Procrastination:** The author says that it is not bad to procrastinate but one must do it thoughtfully on low-value activities and not the important ones.
- **Use the ABCDE Method Continually:** Put down on paper the tasks and rank them on priority by putting A, B, C, D, and E on the basis of importance and criticality. So, A-1 becomes the ‘biggest and ugliest frog of all’ or the most important critical task of priority.
- **Focus on Key Result Areas:** The area of poor performance that produces procrastination should be improved upon to become exceptionally good in the key result area.
- **Apply the Law of Three:** The author advises to determine the three most important tasks and begin working on the most critical one based on priority.
- **Prepare Thoroughly Before You Begin:** The work area needs to be comfortable and clean. The authors say that ‘the cleaner and neater your work environment, the more positive, productive, and confident you will feel’.
- **Take it One Barrel at a Time:** The author has narrated a tale behind this phrase which means that ‘just one step at a time’ needs to be taken to accomplish the biggest task.
- **Upgrade your Key Skills:** Lack of confidence or deficient capability leads to procrastination. Hence, it is essential to upskill oneself to increase the ability and confidence.
- **Identify your Key Constraints:** It is essential to identify the barriers to the accomplishment of tasks. Here also, the rule of 80/20 is applicable. The constraints are 80% that are internal and therefore the correction will come from within. The author says that only 20% are external constraints, so identifying constraints and working on them is essential.
- **Put the Pressure on Yourself:** One should not wait for somebody to motivate or push for work. The author says that we should create our own ‘forcing system’, where we put pressure on ourselves, we raise our own work ethics and we should see ourselves as role models.
- **Motivate yourself into Action:** Be an optimist, keep motivating yourself, be your own cheerleader, and never share your problems with others. Having a positive mental attitude by controlling your thoughts has an impact on every area of life.

- Technology is a Terrible Master: Addition to technology is disastrous, that is checking every mail, and notification continuously leads to distraction. Therefore, ‘digital detox’ for unplugging from technology is essential for the mind to be calm and clear.
- Technology is a Wonderful Servant: Technology should be treated as a servant to make life easier. The technology should be mastered for betterment.
- Focus your Attention: The distraction of any kind (social media, technology, gadgets) leads to a lack of focus and resultant underachievement. The author offers a practical solution by reiterating that planning each day is essential. Then, working for 90 minutes with no distractions and taking a 15-minute break after working continuously, repeating this work-break cycle helps in increasing productivity.
- Slice and Dice the Task: The big and formidable tasks should be broken down into smaller steps with one small piece or ‘slice’ of the job to be completed at a time. Then the next slice and so on. The task gets completed in an easier way with no procrastination.
- Create large Chunks of Time: The important tasks require an uninterrupted long duration of time, hence ‘large chunks’ of time need to be created for the accomplishment of these valuable tasks.
- Develop a Sense of Urgency: The habit of putting urgency behind a task requires conscious effort. The author suggests to repeat the words ‘do it now’ over and over again to overcome inertia and bring momentum.
- Single Handle Every Task: The important, valuable high-priority tasks require persistence and self-discipline to concentrate on them single-mindedly. Repeating the words ‘back to work’, helps overcome distraction.

The above ideas, methods, approaches or techniques are practical and easy to implement for increasing productivity in any area of our lives. The basic theme of the book is to help focus on the most important tasks that one needs to accomplish by developing the habit of ‘eating your frog’, first thing in the morning. So, begin practicing as practice is the key to mastering any skill. With practice, one can develop any habit that is desirable or necessary. The positive consequences are extremely rewarding!

Important Theme

The main theme or strategy of the book ‘eat the Frog’, focuses on completing one important task for the day. Once the most challenging task is completed then the rest of the day can be utilized to complete the smaller tasks without the fear of having to do the hardest thing.

Conclusion

We all have 24 hours in a day to do our work, yet the common complaint is not having enough time. Everyone seems to have an endless list of tasks to be accomplished. But some people are more successful in completing their tasks. Time management is a key to becoming more productive and successful for people from different walks of life. The book spells out 21 methods and techniques for improvements in our performance and productivity. The methods or techniques are simple to follow and easy to implement. The book makes an interesting reading with implementable steps. It is recommended for students, executives, professionals, freelancers, and anybody who wishes to be successful and seeks self-improvement. The book is a practical guide with no philosophy or utopian ideas but more on day-to-day practicality and is recommended for reading.