

*Stop Procrastinating and Get More Done in Less Time!*

# Eat That FROG!

**Brian Tracy**



## EAT THAT FROG!

**H**ello , this is Brian Tracy and welcome to this program on Eat That Frog. In the time that we spend together you're going to learn a whole series of practical ideas that you can use to get more done faster and become more productive than ever before. I'm going to give you some of the best techniques in 30 years of working with some of the most productive and highest paid people in the world. So let's begin.

Here's the greatest breakthrough of all. Your results determine your rewards. In life, everybody wants to earn more money, they want to be more successful, they want to have a nicer home, nicer car, more money in the bank, and no money worries. And the key is to learn how to get more and better results.

Now the interesting thing is that everybody has the same 24 hours per day. Some people use that 24 hours per day in a remarkable way and get an enormous amount done. Other people go through the day and get very, very little done. But at the end of the day, the most important thing is the results that you got. After everything is said and done, nobody really cares in the world of work how nice a person you are, how popular with other people, how cheerful and everything else, which are all helpful. All they care about is "Did you get the job done? Did you get the most important jobs done? And did you get the jobs done that you are most responsible for in your work?" I'm going to show you how to do that.

Now this eat the frog story comes from Mark Twain. Mark Twain once said that, "If the first thing that you do when you wake up in the morning is to eat a live frog, you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that's probably the worst thing that's going to happen to you all day long."

What it means is that your live frog is your biggest, ugliest task. It's the worst thing that you have to do. It's the one that you're most likely to procrastinate on. And as you know, procrastination is not only the thief of life; it's the thief of dreams. It actually leads to failure. Procrastination is a habit that has been learned by procrastinating and you can relearn a new habit by overcoming procrastination and getting on with the job, which you'll learn in the time we spend together.

There are two corollaries to the rule about eating a live frog. First is if you have to eat more than one frog, eat the ugliest one first. What this means is, do the worst first. Do the biggest, most difficult task first because that's the one that makes most of the difference. And then once you've done your most important task, you'll find that the whole day will flow much better.

Corollary number two is, if you have to eat a frog at all, which we all have to do, is that it doesn't pay to sit and look at it for too long. In other words, just do it. Get on with it. Make it the first thing that you do. We'll loop back to this a little bit later.

Now here's an important point. You cannot manage time, you can only manage yourself. So time management is really life management. It's really personal management. It's really the management of the sequence of events in your life. It's the ability to choose what you do first, what you do second, and what you do later if at all. And in this ability to choose is your entire life. When you choose the most important thing and you choose to do that first, and choose to do that rather than anything else, you immediately put your life onto the fast track. In fact, you can actually double your productivity, performance and output in one day simply by changing your order of choices in the way you use your time.

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So what we're talking about is not some abstract business concept; time management. We're talking about life management and everything that happens to you in life. Everything that you do determines your success; it moves you toward your success or it moves you away. Everything counts.

Now the second principle that's important is that you cannot save time. You can only spend time differently. This is really important. You cannot save time because the time goes by inexorably and inevitably. It just tick and ticks. But you can spend it differently, and you can spend it on higher value tasks.

Some people earn ten dollars an hour and some people earn \$100 an hour. What's the difference? The difference is not intelligence, not ability, not natural talent; it's just simply that higher earning people spend their time on more valuable things. And we'll talk about this also, as we go along.

So let's start talking about what we call "creative abandonment." One of the great techniques I learned in time management is that you cannot get more done by working more efficiently and effectively and effectively. You can't create better and longer to-do lists and organize them. That's not the key. The key is you've got to stop doing things.

The only way you can get your time and life under control is you've got to stop doing things of lower value and focus on doing only a few things of higher value. If you'll do that, everything will start to work for you.

So we say that whenever you sit down in the morning and create a to-do list, you must also mentally create a not-to-do list. Sometimes you look at the items on your list and

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say, would it matter at all if this were done in the first place. And if the answer is no, don't do it, or at least don't do it until the things that matter are done.

Goethe the German philosopher once said, "The things that matter most must never be at the mercy of the things that matter least." We have to watch out for that.

So, one of the most important words I learned when I started off studying time management 30 years ago, is consequences. I've written books and sold millions of copies in 32 languages on every aspect of time management. I don't even consider myself an expert. There are some people who define themselves as time management experts. I just consider it a subject that is essential for success and happiness, so I researched it.

What I found was that something is important to the degree to which it has important consequences; high-potential, serious consequences. Something is unimportant to the degree to which it does not have potential serious consequences.

For example, choosing a course of study has high potential consequences because it may affect you for decades. Choosing the person that you marry, or the way that you treat your wife or husband and your children has enormous impact on how they turn out and how their children and their children's children turn out. Choosing the things that you do each day has enormous consequences.

So what you have to do is look at everything you do and say, "What are the consequences of doing or not doing this?" And if the consequences of not doing something are irrelevant, then don't do it, and do the things that have serious immediate consequences. I'll come back revisit this point because it's really important.

To get your time under control, to stop doing things and get yourself organized I suggest that what you do is a KWINK analysis. KWINK stands for Knowing What I Now Know. This is a form of zero-based thinking where you zero-base all of your activities and decisions from the past and ask the following question. If I was not now doing this today, knowing what I now know, would I start it up again today?

This is a very important question because in times of turbulence like today, every single person you meet is in a zero-based thinking situation, including yourself. Everybody is doing things today that, knowing what they now know, they wouldn't start up again today.

When you did start doing it at the time, it seemed like a good idea, given the information you had. But in retrospect, it has turned out to be not such a great idea at all. So you have to ask yourself: is there anything that I'm doing today that, knowing what I now know, I wouldn't get into again today.

## **USE KWINK ANALYSIS**

And how can you tell if you're in a KWINK situation? The answer is stress. Whenever you experience ongoing, chronic stress over anything, or you think and worry about it constantly and it causes you aggravation, it means that you're in a bad situation.

So here's the rule: if your answer is, no I wouldn't get into this situation again today, then the next question is how do I get out, and how fast? How can I discontinue this, and how quickly?

Because once the answer comes up like the final numbers on a slot machine, no I wouldn't get into this again; it's already too late to save the situation. It's over. It's only

a matter of time and suffering before you finally admit that you made a bad decision. So never be afraid to say, "I was wrong; I made a mistake. It seemed like a good idea at the time, but with new information and experience, I realize I made a mistake."

One of great secrets to success, both in time and in life is to cut your losses. Once you realize you've made a mistake, don't throw good time and money after bad. Cut your losses.

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There are three areas where you can clear the decks of your life using a KWINK analysis. Number one is with regard to relationships. You'll find that 80% of your problems or difficulties in life are associated with other people in some way. So you ask this question: is there anybody that I'm involved with today personally or in business that knowing what I now know, I wouldn't get into this relationship again.

If it is in your personal life it is probably the major source of conflict, stress and unhappiness to be involved in a situation that knowing what you now know, you wouldn't get into it again today.

If it is in your business life, very often it's having hired, delegated or assigned something to somebody. So I always ask managers; is there anyone working for you today who, knowing what you now know, you wouldn't hire again today?

I was talking with a group of managers just yesterday and posed this question. All around the room people were nodding and smiling and every one of those managers was thinking of someone or more than one person that, knowing what they now know, they wouldn't hire again. And it dawns on them that this person is the source of most of their problems and most of their stress. I also explain to managers that the reason they are keeping this person on is that he or she does a reasonably good job, is productive and maybe brings in sales, but the downside or negative contribution of a negative person in an organization is far greater than their perceived contribution. When you finally bite the bullet and let go of that person, you'll find that your sales will go up, productivity and moral will improve, and you won't really lose anything.

The only reason we stay in a bad relationship, either business or personal, is that we think that somehow we're going to benefit more than the pain that it costs on the way through. And based on exhaustive research, you never really do. At the end of the day you'll only say one thing; "Why didn't I end this a long time ago?"

Now the reason I'm talking about a KWINK analysis is that if you have a major situation in your life that is unresolved, what will happen is that it will foul up your time management, distort your thinking, and lower your productivity. You can't really do open field running in your life until you get into the clear, and you've got to get clear of the situations that are now dragging you down.



A second area of zero-based thinking, the KWINK analysis has to do with any business process. With any sales or marketing or any product or service you are offering, you've got to ask the question; KWINK? Would I get into this again today, knowing what I now know? And if the answer is no, stop it now.

Jack Welch wrote an article in Business Weekly and in it he said, "If there's anything you would do to save your business, should worse come to worst, don't wait until then, do it now. If there's anything in the back of your mind that you know you should stop or get out of, do it now. Don't wait until you have no choice.

The third area with regard to KWINK analysis has to do with investments. There are three categories of investments; of time, money, or emotions. Now an investment of time is clear to all of us. You've invested a lot of time in a career, time in a relationship, time in a course of study. And then one day you say to yourself, "That was not really a good choice of time." All things considered, I spent a lot of time with that and it's basically lost. But we humans have a terrible aversion to recognizing a loss of any kind. So recognize the loss. Cut your losses and go on to something else. Remember, never worry about something you can't change. And you can't change a past event. What is past is over and gone. There's no going back. Don't try to save time that you've already spent. Don't try to recover time from a situation that you wouldn't get into again anyway, knowing what you now know.

The second type of investment has to do with money. If you've invested a lot of money in something, ask yourself; knowing what I now know, with the state of the market and economy, the value of the investment and so forth, would I put money into this again today?

People go broke in the stock market because they have stocks whose value is going down and down, so they sell their good stocks which are profitable, in order to continue to buy or hold onto their bad stocks, which are losing money. The trouble is that they don't do a KWINK analysis.

Whenever a company gets into serious trouble, they say that the people who got the company into that trouble are very seldom the ones who can get it out of trouble. So they have to bring in a turnaround artist. The turnaround artist or specialist comes in with a very cold eye and simply asks, "Is there anything we're doing here that, knowing what we now know, we wouldn't get into again?" And whatever that is, he chops it immediately. Chop, chop, chop!

He closes down stores, plants and factories and lets people go. And surprise, surprise, within a year the company turns around. But the people who got the company into that situation originally have so much ego invested in being right that they keep doctoring and trying to find ways to make it work, when it's clear to an outsider that it's gone forever.

By the way, one of the great activities that you can do for yourself is to be your own management consultant and personal coach. Stand apart from your situation and ask yourself what you would do differently if you were giving advice to yourself. This will really get your eyes open. Look at your work list each day and if you were giving yourself advice, imagine what you would say about what you would start with and get done as soon as possible.

Emotion, the third area of investment, is the hardest of all. If you've invested an enormous amount of emotion plus probably time in a situation, especially a relationship

but often in a career, job or company, if it's gone, it's gone. One of the things you have to do is summon the courage to admit that you made a mistake; that it seemed like a good idea, but it didn't work out.

You have to think about the future and where you're going, and don't think about the past or what might have happened. So for you to start doing anything new, you've got to stop doing something old. To get in, you have to get out. Your time is limited and your dance card is full. The starting point of good time management is to determine what you're going to stop doing so that you have more time to do the things that will really make a difference in your life; things that have serious potential future consequences.

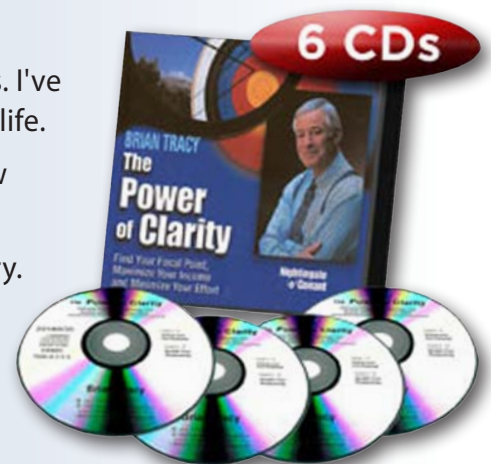
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## **HOW SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE VIEW TIME**

Now this brings us to how the top people think about time. The average person in our society thinks about time in terms of the amount of money that they earn in a year or a month. But top people think about their time differently. They think in terms of their hourly rate. They think in terms of how much they earn each hour, and they are absolutely determined to make each hour pay its maximum amount. It's almost like

extracting juice with a juicer. They want to extract every bit of value they can from every hour. It's interesting that people who think of their job as a wage look at the clock and think about when they can stop. People who think about their time as a precious resource look at the clock and think about how much more they can get done before they have no more time left in the day. They race against the clock all day long.

So you may already know your hourly rate. If you don't, an easy way to calculate it is by taking your annual income and dividing it by 2,000. This represents 8 hours per day over 50 weeks per year, so for example if you earn \$50,000 per year, your hourly rate is \$25. If your goal is to earn \$100,000 per year, your hourly rate would be \$50. Once you have determined your hourly rate, you make a resolution that can change your life. You resolve that you will not do anything during your work day that does not pay you your desired hourly rate. You will not make coffee, shoot the breeze with your friends, read the paper, call home and so on because it doesn't pay \$25 or \$50 per hour. The focus on making every hour count will transform your life completely.

### **The Law of Three**

And this brings us to one of the most amazing qualities of top people, and that is that they focus on the law of three. The law of three says that if you make a list of everything you do in the course of a week or a month and then go over that list, you'll find that there are only three things that pay you your desired hourly rate or more. And the way you discover those three things is to first of all make a list. I've done this with more than 1,000 entrepreneurs, business people; people on the way up. Make a list of everything you do in a week or a month and then go over the list and ask yourself, "If I could only do one thing on this list, which one activity contributes the greatest value to my business?" And this is the word; contribution. It's the most important word in your work life. Your job is to make a contribution that generates wealth that leads to

rewards for you. So always ask, “What is the most valuable contribution I could make? Of all the things that I could do, what is the one activity that contributes the most value?” Then what you do is put a circle around that.

Then you ask the next question: “If I could only do two things on this list all day long, what would be the second thing that would contribute the most value?” And put a circle around that.

Then ask the question one more time. “If I could only do three things on this list, what would be number three?” And every time we do this, whether it’s with doctors or joint venture capitalists, or sales professionals, or financial advisors or real estate experts, in every single case they pop out. One, two, three. In every field they’re different, and in your field it’s different.

## **The Great Secret of Success**

Then, once you’ve identified your three tasks, here is the great secret of success. The great secret of success is to do fewer things but do more important things, and do more of them, do them longer, and get better at them. That’s it. Some of the most successful people that you know only do two or three things. They have everything else delegated, outsourced, or eliminated, and they focus on just two or three things.

I work with doctors who are specialist and make several hundred thousand dollars a year, and people line up to throw \$1,000 bills at them because they are so good. And they only do one thing all day long. They only do their specialty all day long. They may have to do a few things to get prepared to do their specialty, but their specialty is what pays them all the money.

So ask yourself that question; “If I could only do one thing all day long, what would it be?” And then focus on those three things.

So let me repeat the chief productivity rule. Do fewer things, but do more important things, and do more of them, do them longer, and get better at them, until you get into the habit of only working at the things that make a big difference.

This brings us to the two great enemies of personal productivity and life-long success. The first great enemy is called the comfort zone. The comfort zone is based on the natural tendency of human beings to become comfortable doing something, even if it’s not working out that well. They become comfortable in a certain rhythm of working. They become comfortable in a certain way of living. They become comfortable with a certain way of eating and dining and dieting and so on.

What happens is, whatever you do repeatedly, over and over again, quickly becomes a habit. For example, I did a large seminar recently over three days and people said, “Why don’t you change people around in the seminar so they have a chance to sit with different people?” I said well, it’s the most interesting thing; people come into a room and sit down at a particular table or in a particular chair. And then you have a break. After the break what does everybody do? They go straight back to that chair.

Now all you have to do if you really want to cause a lot of anger is have somebody else sit in that chair. A person goes out for coffee, comes back, and somebody else is sitting in the chair. Now they had never sat in that chair in their lives until an hour and a half ago, and now that’s their chair. That’s their comfort zone. You’ve got to be very alert to this because the natural tendency to get into a comfort zone and then to fight to stay there actually destroys human potential.

In order to be successful, according to the work at Chicago, you must consciously and deliberately force yourself out of your comfort zone. You have to force yourself to do more of those things that are uncomfortable at first. But then you become comfortable at a higher level.

So when you begin to manage your time, you have to look at some of the things that you're doing that are interfering with your ability to manage your time and then have the courage to discontinue them.

I'll give you a very simple example with regard to comfort zone. It has to do with email. A few years ago when I started, there was no internet, there was no email. Today, people are obsessed with their email. The first thing they do in the morning is go check their email. Some people keep their email on all day. Some people keep one eye glued to their monitor for fear that an email might come through that they missed. Then as soon as an email comes through they pounce on it like a bird of prey pouncing on food. They pounce on the email and they type out a reply. And then the other person types out a reply back. I've seen people do this up and down the offices. They're five or ten or fifteen feet away from each other and they're typing away on their computer sending messages back and forth up and down the office.

Well, a woman wrote a book last year called, "Don't Check Your Email in the Morning." And as soon as I say that, everybody goes "Oh No!" It hits them in the pit of the stomach. "Not check my email? I've got to check my email!"

No you don't. What if you went away for a week or a month, or if you got ill and went to the hospital? I just spoke to somebody yesterday who is high up in the mountains

in Colorado and has no email, has no access. It's the most remarkable thing; the world will continue to turn. You don't need to check your email in the morning.

Here's the rule; check your email twice a day: at 11:00 and 3:00. Make it clear to people; I check my email twice a day between 11:00 and 3:00. If it's an emergency, phone.

And you know what? You'll find that your whole life gets under control. I was working with a very successful businessman who said "I just don't know how to deal with email. I'm spending three hours a day on my email. It just keeps coming in." He had twelve branches of his company, and he is sitting there, the senior executive and making more than a million dollars a year, tapping away on his keyboard.

I told him first of all; don't check your email in the morning. Second of all, you'll find that 90% of your email is either spam, does not require replies, or can be replied to by someone else. So sit down with your secretary next week and go through your email next week and go through your email with her and show her what you do with it. Then you have her do it from now on. If she has any questions, she'll save an email to a separate folder that you can check later. And if she has other questions, answer these. And so she did, and he did, and surprise, surprise, he came back to our next meeting and told me he saved more than two hours a day. Two hours a day; ten hours a week. He's opened up three new branches. He's increased his income by \$250,000 a year because now he only checks his email occasionally and he never misses a thing. Think about that.

Anyway, the comfort zone is very dangerous, and you've got to get out of the comfort zone, and email is a terrible comfort zone.



The second enemy of success is called the path of least resistance. There is a natural tendency among human beings to do what is fun and easy, what's enjoyable, rather than what is hard and necessary.

My friend Denis Waitley says that most people do what is "tension relieving rather than what is goal achieving." We have a natural tendency just as water runs down hill, to do the fun easy things; to do the things that are enjoyable. Then what we do is we rationalize.

I read an article recently where the word rationalize was broken into two parts; rational lies. In other words, we make up wonderful excuses and reasons why we should be doing things that are useless. I had a gentleman talk to me recently who said, "What about getting along well with your co-workers and talking to people and relaxing and going out for lunch? If you just started concentrating on your work, wouldn't they start to think that you're a little bit standoffish and not very friendly?"

I said "It doesn't matter. If you spend more than 10% of your time socializing, your life is out of control. And the people that care, the people that determine your success and your career do not mind if you concentrate on your work, rather than fooling around in the office. The people who are most important for you to impress are the people who can determine your future. And those people are most impressed by hard continuous work to get results that will help them improve the business.

So focus on pleasing the people whose respect you really require.

This brings us to one of the greatest time savers of all, and that is simply to get better. Get better at the most important things you do. Get better and better, and better.

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I work with people in my field of speaking who make \$25 an hour. I work with people who make \$1,000 an hour. They speak the same amount of time on the same subject to the same types of audiences, and some of them make ten times as much. And why is that? It's because the ones who are being paid a lot are really good at what they do. They are so good at what they do; they are such experts in their field that people are quite amazed.

The key to becoming better at what you do is called deliberate practice. This is one of the great breakthroughs in personal and professional management in the last few years. Based on years of research, we find that people who start off at the beginning of life and turn out to be very successful are not people with great special skills or abilities. Just like the person who's never worked out with weights and let's talk about men. A skinny person like I was, about 155 lbs, and then I met some guys who were into weight lifting. So I got into weight lifting with them for two or three years. My weight went from 155 to 185, all muscle. And those muscles stayed for the rest of my life.

Now here's the important point; everybody has the same physical muscles. Everybody can develop those muscles as much as they want. Everybody has what I call the Schwarzenegger possibility. Arnold Schwarzenegger was a skinny little kid in Graz Austria when he decided to get into bodybuilding, and then he worked out six or seven hours a day for eight years until he won his first contest. Now he's got a fabulous body, won Mr. Universe six times and so on, but he started off just as every other man with a normal body.

My point is that your mind is the same. Your mind has enormous capabilities. The more you use your mind, the better it gets. The smarter you get, the smarter you get. The

more you learn, the more you can learn. The fact is that you have more potential than you could use in 100 lifetimes. But if you don't use it, you lose it. Just like a muscle; if you don't use it, it atrophies and becomes soft and flabby.

So what they found is that over twenty-five years, people who became really successful just kept working that muscle. They kept picking subjects that would help them to be better in their jobs. They picked subjects that would help them to use their other subjects at a higher level. They asked for advice. They would say, "What subject would help me the most at this time?" And their bosses would tell them, and they would put time aside and they would deliberately practice.

Here's what the research found; two things. First of all they found that most people don't do this. And that's why the bottom 80% of people seldom improve their standard of living. They get a job and then they flatline. The top 20% of people increase their income by 11% to 25% per annum and sometimes more, because they're constantly practicing and learning new skills.

They found that deliberate practice, (going back to the comfort zone and the path of least resistance) is hard and it's lonely, and it has no immediate payoff, and no immediate gratification. You have to put time aside, turn off the television, settle down and study for two to three hours at a time. For example today if you want to get an MBA online, you have to study three hours a night. You have to study 1,000 hours a year at home, by yourself with your computer, downloading and taking lessons. Eighty-four percent of people who start an independent course of study as adults quit. 84% of people who sign up for online universities quit, because they just simply don't have the discipline. They come home and they want to watch television, go socialize, check

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email, and eventually they just say, "Oh I just guess it's not right for me." But the top people discipline themselves to do the work and to deliberately develop the skills.

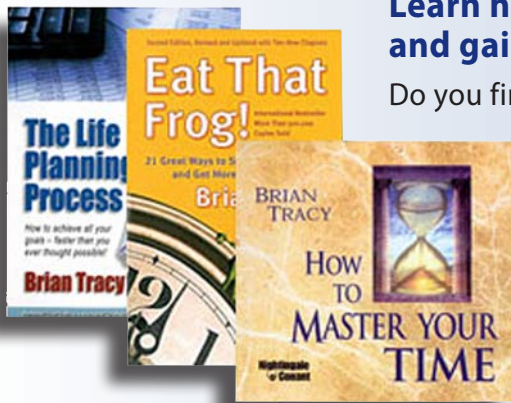
Now here's another thing they found: 80% of the population, once they get a job, work hard for the first six to twelve months to master the job, and then they never get any better. All they have is more experience, but they never get any better. They flatline and for the rest of their careers their income goes up at 3% a year, just about the cost of living.

One of the great problems we have in our society today is the enormous number of people who don't feel they're making any progress. And of course there are always politicians who will speak for them and say, "Oh don't worry. You don't have to learn or grow or become better or make a valuable contribution. We'll just take the money away from the people who are doing that and give it to you, because after all, you're entitled to it because you are here; you're a person and everybody should have the same."

And what that does is it discourages the hard workers and it discourages the lazy people, because the lazy people will work less and the hard people will work less and the whole society goes down just like the water level in a big bathtub.

## **Two Important Points**

So here are two important points. In order for you to manage your time well, you have to have very clear specific goals about what you want to accomplish. One of the things that I recommend for every person in order to manage your time at the highest and best level, increase your productivity and performance, earn more money, and have a happier life is goals.



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I suggest this exercise. When you finish listening to this, sit down and make a list of ten goals. Some of you have heard me recommend this. I'm on my way to Russia. I'll be speaking to 4,000 people in Moscow on Friday, and I will be telling them the same thing.

Take a piece of paper and write down ten goals that you'd like to accomplish in the next 12 months or so. Once you've written down ten goals, then you go over the list and ask this magic question: "If I could only achieve one goal on this list with 24 hours, which one goal would have the greatest positive impact on my life?" Then you put a circle around that goal. Mostly it's a financial goal, sometimes it's a health goal, sometimes it's a business goal, or a family goal. Whatever it is, the one that could have the greatest positive impact on your life; put a circle around it.

Then, make a list of everything that you could do to achieve that goal, set a deadline on the goal, and then take action on your list and work on it every single day. Every single day do something that moves you toward the achievement of your most important goal.

You cannot imagine the impact this will have on your life. People come back to me and they say “You will not believe what’s happened to me!” I spoke to a businessman yesterday who started off as a construction laborer and high school dropout. He built a house by going and looking at how other home builders were building houses, after they had shut down the job site at night. He would take what he learned and go back the next day to ask questions. “How do you lay foundations; how do you put up dry-wall, who do you find to put in the roofing and the plumbing and the electricity? He learned how to build houses by asking other people and looking at the houses. Today he told me he makes \$10 million a year. He has an enormous company with 600 outlets throughout the United States and Canada and he said he can hardly believe the money he’s making today. What he did was to deliberately get better and better in his field.

He said, “Your contribution; your work on goals was what turned my life around twenty years ago. When I began to listen to you and practice your ideas, my whole life changed. So, you don’t have to wait twenty years. Just make a list of goals, pick one, and work on it every day. The impact on your life will be extraordinary.

Then what you do is you ask yourself this next question. Thinking about this goal and it seems that in order to achieve something you’ve never achieved before, you have to develop and practice a skill you’ve never practiced before. You have to become a person you’ve never been before.

So then you ask this question; with regard to this goal, what one skill, if you could wave a magic wand and be absolutely excellent at it within 24 hours, would help you the most to achieve your most important goal?

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Now this is an incredible question. What one skill? Here's the great news; all skills are learnable. All business skills, all sales skills, all money-making skills are learnable. You can learn any skill you need to learn to achieve any goal you set for yourself.

There are many people who say, "Well I'm not very good at negotiating, or at closing, or at prospecting or hiring people, and so on. Well, give yourself a shake. The fact of the matter is that these are just learnable skills. It's amazing how many people are held back year after year because they lack one skill, sort of like a lynch pin skill, that would help them use all their other skills at a high level.

I'll give you an example: in selling there are seven key skills. They are: prospecting, establishing rapport, identifying needs accurately, presenting your product or service as the best choice, answering objections, closing the sale, and getting re-sales and referrals. Your weakest key skill sets the height of your income. People say, "I'm not very good at prospecting." That will determine that they live in a small house and drive a small car, and worry about money all their lives.

The fact is that prospecting is a learnable skill. I've worked with people who made a decision instead of avoiding prospecting, which they didn't like and were fearful about, they decided they were going to become very good at prospecting. One gentleman told me that within six months he's tripled his income, moved to a nicer house, put his kids in private schools, bought new cars, was promoted two or three times, eventually was made manager in an international company, and given 25 people under him. He had overrides, bonuses, signing bonuses. He said he could not believe the extraordinary difference. In less than a year from the time he decided to become really good in prospecting rather than being afraid of it, he had transformed his life. So remember

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that the only reason you're afraid in a particular skill area is because you haven't mastered it yet. You just haven't mastered it yet. So do what the top people do. Identify the skill that you need, write it down as a goal, make a plan, and work on it every day.

In a month or a year from now you'll look back and you'll have mastered that skill. You'll be just as calm and confident as possible in that skill and you'll be getting phenomenal results.

Do you know what the most important skill for sales managers is? It's hiring the right people in the first place. Ninety-five percent of a sales manager's success or even any manager's success is picking the right people to help them get the job done. Hiring people, interviewing, and selecting – these are all learnable skills. There are books and tapes and courses all over the place. It would be terrible for you to be held back in life because you lack one easily learnable skill that could enable you to multiply your results and possibilities. So think about that because it really opens your eyes.

This brings us to what I call the leverage factors. In military parlance they use an expression 'force multiplier.' A force multiplier is what enables a smaller force to defeat a larger force. One of the force multipliers that we study are, speed; a smaller force moving with greater speed can take advantage of an opening. Another is intelligence. In business the force multiplier of intelligence means that you learn and you know things about your customers, your markets and your potential that other people don't, that enable you to get a market advantage.

Another military force multiplier is concentration, which enables a smaller force to concentrate its resources at a point of difference where it can make an enormous break-



through before the other force realizes it. And of course, the ability to concentrate in time management is absolutely essential.

## 7 LEVERAGE FACTORS

So let me give you seven force multipliers or leverage factors that you can use in your work to get vastly more done.

**1** Work harder. Just simply work harder. It's amazing how lazy people are, and how little they work and how much time they waste. So if you make a decision to just work hard when you get to work, concentrate on your task, put your whole heart into what you're doing and just work, work, work, you'll find that one of the greatest reasons for success in life is that people work harder. Eighty-five percent of self-made millionaires said that the reason they became millionaires starting with nothing was because they worked harder than their competitors. They worked harder than other people. And you can do the same thing.

**2** Work faster. Pick up the pace. Pick up the tempo. Imagine that you're in a heck of a hurry and just work quickly. Do your jobs quickly and get back to people quickly. A great time management principle I learned was the principle of working in real time. That means that when something comes up, deal with it now. When you get a phone message, phone back immediately. When you have to make a decision, make it immediately. When you have to answer an email that's important, do it now. Don't accumulate tasks. If the task can be done in less than 2 minutes, in almost every case you should do it right away, and then get back to your main task.

**3** Work longer. This again is one of the great secrets of success. Start a little earlier, work a little harder, stay a little later. Come in one hour earlier and get your day planned and get your work under way before anybody else gets there. Work through lunchtime. Don't go out for lunch, just eat quickly and then get back to work, and do more work. Then, work an hour longer. Let everybody go home and crowd all the streets. You just go in behind them in the slipstream, and you'll get home at pretty much the same time. But, you'll get twice as much done if you start a little earlier, work a little harder and stay a little later.

Here's one of the great secrets for success; always be there when your boss arrives and always be there when your boss leaves. The boss will not mention it or comment on it for a while, but at a certain point in time everything will start to change for you. You will become known as the go-to person. You'll become known as the person that, "If you want something done, go to him or her."

So working longer is really important and can literally put you on the side of the angels. And if you combine that with working harder and working faster, you'll double and triple your productivity, virtually the first day.

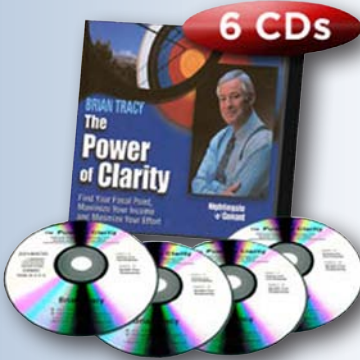
**4** Work together. Work in teams; work with other people. There are some tasks that take an enormous amount of time for a single person to do but with a large group of people, each one specializing and doing part of the task, you can get a tremendous amount done.

I was at a summer fair where a home builder raffled off a new home and they said that whoever won the home they would build it for them in basically 48 hours. And that's

what they did. They used a series of crews and literally built the entire home in two days. Normally it would take at least six to eight weeks to build but they did it in 48 hours with everyone working harder, faster, longer, and specializing in their particular area.

**5** Do more important things. This is a great leverage factor. The 80/20 rule; 20% of what you do accounts for 80% of your results. If you have a list of ten things to do, two of those items will be worth more than all the others put together. Discipline yourself to work on those items that are most important because you are producing 5 or 10 times as much working on your top tasks as working on your average tasks.

**6** Cluster similar tasks. This is one of the great time management tools. Do all your reports at once; do all of your proposals at once, all of your prospecting calls at once. Whatever they are, do them all together rather than one here and one there, and one at another time during the day. What happens is that when you do a whole series of similar tasks together you get onto what is called the learning curve. Whereas the first task may take ten minutes, the next one will take nine, the next one eight, and the next one only seven minutes. Pretty soon, you'll be burning through the tasks at two to three minutes at a time. You'll save 50 – 80% of the time on each subsequent task. You'll get more done that you can possibly imagine. So do similar tasks together.



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**7** Our old friend; get better at your key tasks. Get better at the most important and most valuable things you do, and do them faster and do them harder and get them done.

Now here is one of the greatest of all rules, and it comes from a study by Robert Half International who found that 50% of all working time is wasted. Fifty percent of all working time is spent on things of low value or no value. Fifty percent of working time is spent in idle chit-chat with coworkers, checking email, reading the paper, drinking coffee, going for breaks and lunches, coming in late, leaving early, going shopping, and personal business. So here is the way that you overcome this natural, habitual, comfort zone, path of least resistance tendency to waste time and work, and that is to “work all the time you work.”

From now on make a decision, make a resolution; don't waste time. Don't waste time; work all the time you work. If somebody comes up to you and asks if you've got a minute, you say yes, but not right now. Let's talk later. Right now I have to get back to work. I've got to get this job done. I'm under the gun. I'd love to talk to you but I've got to get back to work. Always have a sense of urgency, like you've got to get back to work right away. You've got to get this job done or somebody is going to be really mad. And people will get out of your way and go waste other people's time. You see, the biggest time waster in the world of work is other people who are working at a slow or low level and want to chit-chat with you. They just don't have a lot going on, so they want to kill their day. And people have gotten into the comfort zone of believing that as long as they're at work and away from home, they're actually working. So what they do is they just coast. They chit-chat and say that it's too late to do anything; it's almost coffee break, it's almost lunchtime, it's almost quitting time, so rather than do anything I'll just go and chat with him or her and see what they're doing.

And remember that you don't need to spend more than 10% of your time getting along well with the other kids. Ninety percent of your time should be spent with your head down working. Imagine that there's going to be a contest in your company and they're going to bring in an outside team of researchers and put hidden video cameras all over the company. They're going to try to figure out who is the hardest worker in this company. They're going to do surveys and they're going to ask each person in the company, "Who do you think, aside from yourself, is the hardest worker in this company?" And whoever wins the contest gets a fabulous prize.

Then imagine that this contest is going on but nobody knows about it but you, and your job is to win. A year from now when they announce the prizes, you're going to be at the top because everybody is going to say that they work hard and she works hard but you, that guy over there or that woman, "That person is the hardest worker in this company."

That will bring you to the attention of your superiors. It'll move you ahead faster, will get you paid more and promoted faster than anything that you can do. Win the contest for being the hardest worker. Work all the time you work.

And if you're going to work all the time you work, work on the activities that really make a difference.

## **ABCDE Method**

So here's a very simple time management system that you can use. It's been taught for many years and many people have said that it transformed their lives. Many people have come up to me and waved my book where I teach this time management system and said, "This is the best book I ever read in my life. This changed my life." Many others

have actually created seminars based on this principle and system, and have taught it to everyone in their company all over the world. It's very simple and it's based on our concept of consequences.

What you do to use this system – and if all you get from our time together is this system, your whole life is going to be fabulous in terms of your time. First of all, make a list. Make a list of everything that you have to do in the course of the day. The best time to make the list is the night before. Write down everything you have to do the night before. Then take and review this list carefully using the ABCDE method.

The ABCDE stands for five different ways of allocating time on this list. A is an activity that has serious potential consequences. It is something that you must do. If you don't do it and do it well and quickly, you're going to be in trouble. People are going to be angry, disappointed, it can even affect your career. So write an A next to each of the most important or "must do" tasks that have dramatic consequences on your list.

Then you go through and write a B. A B is something that it would be nice to do. It has mild consequences, but it's not as serious as an A. Then you go through and identify all the Bs. An A task is one that has to be done; a presentation that has to be made or a call that has to be organized. A B task could be returning emails. Virtually all emails are B tasks. They're nice to do but don't make that much difference. Having lunch with a coworker, chatting with somebody, and reading the paper are nice to do and have a marginal effect on your work, but they're not as important as an A.

And the rule is never do a B when you have an A left undone. If you can discipline yourself to follow that one rule; never do a B when you have an A left undone, you'll double your productivity.

A C task is something that would be fun to do, but it has no consequences. Going shopping, checking the email or the internet for things for sale, reading the sports page, talking about what's on television; these are things that are fun to do, but they have no consequences at all. And the rule is never to a C when you have a B left undone, and never do a B when you have an A left undone.

Now is the ABCDE formula, D stands for delegate. What you do is you delegate everything that you possibly can to someone else who can do it reasonably well. Remember the biggest reason that people don't move up in their careers, according to Peter Drucker, is they keep going back and doing what they were doing before they got promoted, because they're comfortable there. They fall back into their comfort zone.

This is not for you. Once you move up, there are certain things that you just don't do any more. You get them done through others.

Finally, E is for eliminate. Eliminate everything that is not important to your life. Even if you've been doing it for a long time, even if it's fun, even if it's comfortable or enjoyable, stop doing it. Remember that the only way you can get your time under control is to stop doing things of low or no value. Maybe you can put them on your not-to-do list and get to them when you've done everything on your to-do list, which will never happen.

So then you go over your list and select your A1 task. What is the most important thing? If I could only do one thing on this list before I was called out of town for a month, what one activity would I want to be sure to do? Then put an A1 next to that task.

Then you say, if I could only do two things on this list before I was called out of town for a month, what would be number two? And if I could only do three things, what

would be number three? And by doing those; one, two three, then you start on your A1. This is the key; starting on your A1.

Your A1 is your frog. It's the worst first. It's the biggest, ugliest task. It's the one thing that has the most serious consequences. It's the one task that makes all the difference in your life. If you do everything else but not this task, then to that degree you're going to underachieve and underperform.

So the key to overcoming obstacles, the key to getting out of the comfort zone and to succeeding is to work on your A1. Then you back your A1 with the principle of "single-handling."

Single-handling means that once you start on your most important task, you stay with that task until it is complete. You discipline yourself to work and work continually on that task. If you get diverted for any reason, get back to the task as fast as you can. Remember that by working single-mindedly on a single task and doing it 100%, you can actually save as much as 80% of the time required to complete that task.

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## **TECHNIQUES FOR OVERCOMING PROCRASTINATION**

So before we finish, I want to give you some ideas to overcome procrastination. These are very simple ideas that you can practice over and over until they become automatic.

Number one is to plan and organize your day in advance as we just discussed. Never work without a list. When something new comes up, write it down on the list, and then only work on things that are really important. Keep focused on your most important task. Keep saying, "I've got to get back to work."

Number two is to set priorities and focus on number one. If you just do those things; make a list, set priorities, and focus on number one, you double your performance and output.

Number three is to repeat over, and over to yourself: "Do it now. Do it now. Do it now." There is something about that affirmation that motivates you to get into the task. So you look at your work list and you've got 1,000 things you could do; you could check email, talk to people and so on. You say, "Wait a minute; Do it now, do it now, do it now." Just push yourself into starting. Once you get started it's like pushing a boulder

down a mountain; a whole landslide begins to go. You start to get momentum and you start to get into the task.

Number four is to keep repeating “Back to work, back to work, back to work.” Whenever you feel like slowing down or taking a break or talking with someone else, you say wait a minute, I’ve got to get back to work.

Number five is to use the inside-outside method. This is where you take a large task and you realize that like a jelly donut, the jelly, 20% of the task accounts for 80% of the value of the task, and you start with the most important part first. Just get on with the most important part.

Let me give you an example. I write and publish four or five books every year. Professional writers write a book every two to three years. I do four to five a year and I don’t even consider myself to be a professional writer, although I’ve published more than fifty books that are in 38 languages and 55 countries and have sold millions of copies. The reason I do this is for my business purpose. I write a book that I think will enhance my reputation and increase my authority and get me more speaking engagements.

Why is it that I can write so many books? It is because I recognize that the most important part of a book is to outline it completely. Eighty percent of the value comes from me sitting down and thinking through everything that will be in that book before I start writing.

I call this a “job of work.” A job of work is a big ugly chunk or piece of work that takes me several hours of writing and rewriting. I have to work myself up to it and get myself

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organized and clear my decks, and I usually do it on the weekends when there are no interruptions. But once I've done that, everything else begins to flow.

So ask yourself, for the biggest task – the biggest job that you could complete, more important than anything else, what is the core? What is the essential task you need to get done on the inside?

The next time management technique is called “outside-inside.” And that’s where you start around the edges and just do one small part of a big task. Sometimes just doing one small part of a big task motivates you to do another small part, and then another small part. And pretty soon you’re into the rhythm and the whole task gets done.

Another time management technique, one of the most popular of all, is called the “salami slice.” How do you eat a loaf of salami? One slice at a time. You don’t try to eat the whole loaf at once. So you divide your task into steps. When I have a major project I make a list, sometimes of twenty or thirty or forty things that have to be done in sequence in order to complete that project. Then I’ll just pick one of those slices and do that. Sometimes a slice will take two or three hours and sometimes a slice will take five minutes. So I just take a slice and do one little piece at a time. Once I’ve done that, I take the second slice. Pretty soon, once you get into it you overcome procrastination and you begin producing at a high level.

The next methods you can use which is very popular is called the “Swiss cheese” method. You know that Swiss cheese is full of holes, so what you do is punch out a hole in a task. You’re looking at this big task and maybe you don’t have time to do it all or you’re not motivated, so you just punch out one piece; “I can do this one piece.”

It's like putting one brick in a wall. One little task that will only take you two or three minutes; maybe just organizing my notes or organizing my preparation. I can do that quickly, and sometimes by taking one chunk of the task you can get started and overcome procrastination, and get going.

And then finally, use the 20/80 rule. The 20/80 rule is similar to the inside-out rule. You start work on the top 20 of activities that account for 80% of the value.

## **Final Questions to Answer**

So here are the final keys to Eat That Frog; the final three questions.

Question number one is always ask, "What results are expected of me? And of all the results that are expected of me, what are the most important results? And of all those results, what is number one?" Then start on your number one most important result.

The second question you can ask is, "What can I and only I do that if done really well, will make a real difference?" Remember that there is only one answer to that question at any given time. If you don't do it, no one else can or will do it. But if you do it, it will make a major difference. What is it for you? Then whatever that is, be sure that you're working on that most of the time.

The third question which summarizes all of time management, all the thousands of books, articles and courses is simply this: "What is the most valuable use of my time right now?" What is the most valuable use of your time right now? That is the great question of time management and it is the purpose of every single exercise we've gone through. It is to help you identify the most valuable use of your time right now,

and then to do that and only that, and do it until it is complete. If you can do that, you can conquer the world.

So here's the final exercise. Imagine you come to work one day and your boss comes to you and says "Look, I've got a dilemma. I won an all expense paid first class trip to Paris for one week at a social gathering yesterday and I can't go. It's time dated and the person has to leave tomorrow, and I want to give it to you because I like you so much. But here's deal; you have to get all your week's work done by today at 5:00. If you can get all of your week's work done by 5:00 today you can have the tickets; first class airfare to Paris, first class hotels, spending allocation, tours, beautiful restaurants, all inclusive if you get all of your work done today."

Now if you had this situation and somebody came up to you saying "Hey, do you have a minute to talk," would you stop and shoot the breeze or have a cup of coffee or read the newspaper? If you had a situation like that, how would you work? How would you start your day? How much time would you take off? Would you work longer, harder, or faster? Would you work on higher value tasks? Would you set clear priorities? Would you ignore all distractions? Would you refuse to talk to other people? Would you forget your email?

You bet your bippy you would! You would be so focused and concentrated on getting your most important tasks done, you would not look up or talk to anybody because you have to have it all done by 5:00. Five o'clock is your finish line, and then you collect the all expenses paid vacation.

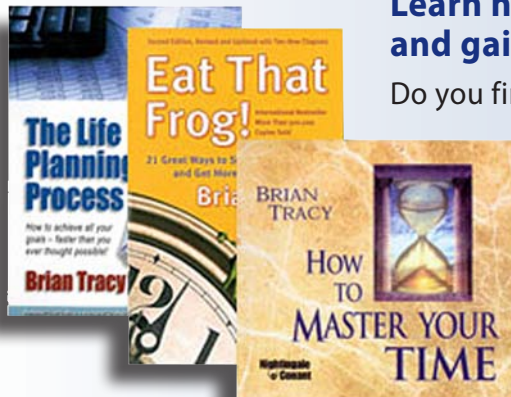
My point is this; if you make a decision to work every day as though when you got all of your work done by 5:00 you would get a first class vacation for you and your spouse,

you'll be astonished at how much more you get done. If you keep thinking about this all the time; "Wow, if I want to move ahead the key is to get more and better results." And the key to getting more and better results is not to do anything except to get more and better results.

So what you say is, "I'd love to talk to you, but right now I've got to get back to work."

So this is your job from this moment onward. Make a plan, set priorities, work on your most important task, and when somebody tries to interrupt you say, "I'd love to talk to you, but right now I've got to get back to work."

Have a great day.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**B**rian Tracy is Chairman and CEO of Brian Tracy International, a company specializing in the training and development of individuals and organizations.

Brian's goal is to help you achieve your personal and business goals faster and easier than you ever imagined.

Brian Tracy has consulted for more than 1,000 companies and addressed more than 5,000,000 people in 5,000 talks and seminars throughout the US, Canada and 56 other countries worldwide. As a Keynote speaker and seminar leader, he addresses more than 250,000 people each year.

He has studied, researched, written and spoken for 30 years in the fields of economics, history, business, philosophy and psychology. He is the top selling author of over 50 books that have been translated into dozens of languages.

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He has traveled and worked in over 90 countries on six continents, and speaks four languages. Brian is happily married and has four children. He is active in community

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