

Have you eaten your frog today???

Starting our day by eating a live frog may sound weird, funny, or even outrageous. But what would you do if you had no choice but to eat that frog?

Either you will delay it forever as we normally do with anything we find difficult, or else if you have the wisdom of Mark Twain (to whom the metaphor is attributed), you would probably accomplish this undesirable but unavoidable task first thing in the morning and start the day with the feeling of satisfaction that "it's probably the worst thing you'll do all day". Just replace the 'undesirable', 'unavoidable' and the 'worst' with the 'most important' and the same rule applies.

This is exactly what Brian Tracy, the bestselling author of numerous books and the worldrenowned consultant- trainer on personal development and time management, proposes in his book "Eat That Frog": the Key to personal happiness is not how much work one does, but the ability to complete a job that one considers the most important to the best of one's ability and satisfaction.

There will never be enough time to complete our task, but there should always be enough time to complete the most vital task that will contribute to our success. So we should rather stop procrastinating and get into action, i.e. prepare to eat the frog, NOW.

Brian Tracy, in his book, has laid out 21 ways to help the readers stop procrastinating and manage their times effectively to achieve personal goals. Each of the 21 ways suggested in the book is complete in itself and can be used as per one's convenience.

Tracy places importance on clarity and definiteness of purpose before we set out to accomplish our goal. Proper planning is also emphasized in more than one rule. Most of the rules talk about self motivation at length, like the necessity of becoming an addict to success, being our own cheer leaders and not waiting for others to motivate us, single handling tasks, upgrading our key skills and talents etc.

What I liked about this book is that Tracy has framed the rules in such a way that they are easy to recall. For example, the rule of 3Ds : Decision, Discipline and Determination, or the six -P formula: Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance, the 80/20 Rule (Pareto Principle)- meaning 20% of what we do amounts to 80% of the value of what we do, and therefore the necessity of being selective and being focused on objectives.

Also, the frog metaphor has been beautifully extended through out the book to fit specific objectives:

If you have to eat two frogs, eat the ugliest one first (pick the most important task)...

If you have to eat a live frog at all, it doesn't pay to sit and look at it for very long (stop procrastinating)

"How do you eat an elephant?" ... "One bite at a go" (importance of chunking; take one step at a time)

"You can not eat every tadpole and frog in the pond, but you can eat the biggest and the ugliest one, and that will be enough, at least for the time being" (focus on the most important task)

"...get rid of the tadpoles and concentrate on big frogs" (avoid procrastinating on low value tasks that do not contribute towards achievement)

..."the better you become at eating a particular type of frog, the more likely you are to just plunge in and get it done" (hone and upgrade key skills)

..."There are frogs you can eat, or learn to eat, that can make you one of the most important people in your business or organization..." (learn new skills)

..."What kind of frogs do you most enjoy eating?" (Select a task that you would enjoy doing)

Each chapter in the book opens with an appropriate quotation and fitting quotations are interspersed through out, some of my favorite being:

"If all you ever do is all you have ever done, then all you'll ever get is all you ever got." (Popular saying in Texas)

"A journey of a thousand leagues begins with a single step." (Lao-tzu)

"Anytime you stop striving to get better, you're bound to get worse." (Pat Riley, basketball coach)

Since the dream to be successful in life, or the habit of procrastination, is not specific to any profession, this book will be useful to anybody and everybody willing to help themselves up the ladder of success.

Yes, I know that we all already know what this book has to tell or sell. Same is true of all books on self-development. They remind us of what we already know but do not practice for some or other reason and wait for someone to reiterate it for us. That is precisely why you will find this book handy. It is a thin book of 120 pages, and can be read at one go. This is one more reason to recommend it.

By the time you finish this book, I'm sure you will not only be comfortable with the idea of eating the frog, but actually enjoy it.