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MINDSET & DISCIPLINE

Eat That Frog: Why the Hardest Task Pays the Most

If the first thing you do each morning is your hardest, most important task, the rest of the day takes care of itself. A simple cure for the productivity trap.

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Brian Tracy borrows a line often attributed to Mark Twain: if the first thing you do each morning is eat a live frog, you can go through the day knowing the worst is behind you. Your frog is your biggest, most important, most easily-avoided task — the one you keep pushing to later. Tracy's advice is simple and ruthless: eat it first.

The productivity trap

Most of us do the opposite. We start with the small, easy, comfortable tasks — email, tidying, busywork — because they give a quick hit of progress. The big, important task sits there, growing heavier by the hour, draining energy through dread. By the time we get to it, if we get to it, the day is gone and the best of our focus with it.

> **“Eat a live frog first thing in the morning and nothing worse will happen to you the rest of the day.”**
>
> **— Brian Tracy, Eat That Frog! (after Mark Twain)**

Why first thing matters

Your willpower and focus are highest early, before the day fills with other people's priorities. Spend that prime energy on the task that actually moves your business, and you win the day before most people have finished their coffee. Everything after the frog feels easy by comparison.

- The night before, name tomorrow's frog — the one task that matters most.
- Do it first, before email and before the noise gets in.
- If there are two frogs, eat the ugliest one first.
- Protect the first block of your day; guard it like it is the day.

> **THE LINK TO THE VITAL 20%**
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> Your frog is usually one of the vital few tasks that produce most of your results. Eating it first means you are doing your highest-leverage work when you are at your best — the opposite of being busy but unproductive.

The bottom line

Stop starting with the easy stuff. Identify the one task that would make today a win, and do it first — eat that frog. Win the morning with your most important work, and the rest of the day, and the business, takes care of itself.

Sources

- Brian Tracy, Eat That Frog! — do the most important task first.
- Brian Tracy, Goals! — priorities and the vital few.

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