



BOOK SUMMARY

Eat That Frog!

By Brian Tracy

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mindset . momentum . merakee



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Who is this summary for?

"Eat That Frog" by Brian Tracy is a well-written and easy-to-digest list of 21 tips for stopping procrastination and getting more work done. This guide is great for anyone who feels overwhelmed by work and doesn't know where to start. Tracy shares various methods for planning and prioritizing, shows how to identify the most important tasks, and offers tips for staying focused. It's an excellent and helpful guide.

In this summary

This summary will start with a brief discussion of the three key qualities you need to cultivate in order to develop the habits recommended by Tracy. Then, we will explore each of the 21 tips, which include planning your day in advance, the law of three, and slicing and dicing tasks.



BRIAN TRACY'S THREE D'S

Tracy explains that **decision-making, discipline, and determination** are the three critical qualities for adopting new habits. Decision-making is necessary for completing tasks and seeing them through to the end. Discipline comes into play when you need to repeat new habits over and over until they become automated. Finally, Tracy explains that determination is vital in the introductory stages of any new habit. You need the determination to drive the motivation to keep going until your habit becomes more natural.

- I. Make a **decision** to develop the habit of task completion.
- II. Discipline yourself to practice the **principles** you are about to learn.
- III. Back everything you do with **determination** until the habit becomes permanent.

1. Set the Table

Tracy describes his first tip as 'setting the table.' He explains that having clarity about goals and objectives is one of the most crucial tools for productivity. When you are clear about what your goals are and what you need to do to achieve them, you will find yourself working faster and getting more done. Tracy outlines the seven key steps you need to follow to gain a sense of clarity and increase your productivity:

1. Decide what it is that you want.
2. Commit to that by writing it down.
3. Establish a deadline and sub-deadlines for specific tasks.
4. Identify everything that needs to be done to reach your goal and write it all down in a list.
5. Arrange your list into a clear plan, beginning with what needs to be addressed first.
6. Start actioning your plan as soon as possible.
7. Commit to working on something every day to ensure you are doing everything you can to reach your goal.

"Clear written goals have a remarkable effect on your thinking. They motivate you and galvanize you into action. They stimulate your creativity, release your energy, and help you to overcome procrastination as much as any other factor."



2. Plan Every Day in Advance

Tracy believes that you should plan every single day in advance. Never reach a day without knowing what you plan to get done. Being able to plan things will have a significant effect on your life; it means

that you will never approach a day of the unknown, and you'll always understand what is expected of you and what you expect of yourself.

"Your mind, your ability to think, plan, and decide, is your most powerful tool for overcoming procrastination."

Tracy defines his "Six-P Formula: Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance." Tracy explains that planning is a simple task; it doesn't require a lot of your time, yet an astounding number of people fail to plan. And if you don't already plan, you'll be pleasantly surprised about your productivity levels when you begin a planning process.

When you have a large project pending, take the time to list all the steps required to complete the task. If you arrange these steps into a sequence according to priority and deadlines, you'll immediately have a clear timeline and plan. Work from the top of the list down, and you'll find yourself making massive progress before you know it.

3. Apply 80/20 Rule to Everything

Tracy believes that the 80/20 rule can be applied to everything. 80/20 is a popular way to view business and sales behavior. For example, 20% of what you do will likely account for 80% of your results. 20% of your customers will create 80% of your sales. You get the idea. Tracy is a firm believer in this ratio and thinks you can apply this to your everyday tasks.

Tracy explains that you may have a list of 10 different tasks or jobs, each requiring a similar amount of time. However, the reality is that not all of those tasks will provide equal value. It's likely that one or two are significantly more important and will add much greater value than the others. Obviously, these are the tasks you need to tackle first. Prioritize your list by importance; achieving just one of those critical tasks may yield more results than completing each of the other eight or nine tasks. In Tracy's wise words, "eat that frog first."

"The most valuable tasks you can do each day are often the hardest and most complex. But the payoff and rewards for completing these tasks efficiently can be tremendous. For this reason, you must adamantly refuse to work on tasks in the bottom 80 percent while you still have tasks in the top 20 percent left to be done. Resist the temptation to clear up small things first."



4. Consider the Consequences

Tracy recommends considering the potential outcomes and consequences of any task before you take on it. This should help you determine its importance.

Another thing Tracy suggests you consider is your perspective on time. He explains that those with a long-term view of their lives tend to make significantly better decisions about how they spend their time and which tasks they prioritize. Conversely, individuals with a narrow or short-term outlook on their life and career may not make the best choices. By contemplating your future—whether five, ten, or twenty years ahead—you're more likely to make decisions and take actions that will help you achieve your long-term goals. This approach will greatly enhance your productivity and work output.

" Long-term thinking improves short-term decision making."

5. Practice Creative Procrastination

Tracy recommends practicing creative procrastination. This is the 5th tip. The reality is that you are unlikely to be able to get everything you need to do done on any given day. You'll need to let something go, and this is where Tracy recommends you procrastinate on the smaller tasks. The little bits and pieces that can be time wasters are often the tasks you can skip. If you choose to procrastinate on your small, unimportant tasks, you'll find yourself more successful than if you decide to procrastinate on the important, value-adding tasks.

You need to determine your priorities. Additionally, Tracy explains that you need to set posterriorities. While we all understand priorities, a posteriority is defined as lower-value activities that you do less of, later, and sometimes not at all. Understand which tasks are priorities and which ones are not posteriorities.

6. Use the ABCDE Method

Tracy explains that the ABCDE method is one way to set your priorities daily. It's a simple method that can save you time and increase your productivity tenfold. So, how do you do it?

1. Begin with a list of all your daily tasks.
2. Label each task with an A, B, C, D or E.
3. A = the most important task, something that MUST be done today. There can be more than one A task, but again, prioritize these as A1, A2, A3, etc., with A1 being the single most important.



4. Tasks labeled B, C, D, or E are there to be dealt with only once all A tasks are completed. These tasks are not your priority. They get done once your priorities have been fully addressed.

"Harness your willpower to start and persist with this one crucial task, the most essential single task you could undertake. Tackle the whole frog and don't stop until it's entirely done."

7. Focus on Key Result Areas

Tracy explains that you need to focus on your key result areas. A key result area is something that you are entirely in control of and responsible for completing. Nobody else will do it, so if you don't, it won't get done.

When working in an office, it's important to have a discussion with your boss or superior and identify your own key result areas. These are your most important responsibilities, and it's important that you and everyone that you work with understand which areas of work are designated to whom.

Tracy suggests that once your key result areas have been identified, you rate yourself based on your strengths and weaknesses within that area. Define what areas you are strong in with a nine or a ten, and areas that need work can be a one or a two. This will allow you to acknowledge where you make the most results and where you are underperforming. The next step is to consider what skills you can learn to improve your weaknesses and have a significant impact on your work output and career. This is where you need to focus!

8. Apply the Law of Three

Tracy's 8th tip is to apply the law of three. You need to identify three key tasks that you believe offer the most value and contribution to your company. This is where your focus needs to be most of the time for your work output to be performing at its best.

Tracy suggests you take 30 seconds to write down your top three goals. These should come naturally to you; don't spend too much time pondering. Tracy explains that in your life, you have three key areas: family/relationships, health/fitness, and your career. If you can set one goal for each area, then you are likely focusing on the right things. Next, Tracy recommends you take a few minutes to rate yourself in each of these areas to determine what you need to work on most to achieve your goals.

When you're working, you should truly be working. Tracy explains that any time you waste chatting with co-workers, daydreaming, or doing non-work-related tasks means you have less time to concentrate on what's important. When you commit a time slot to work, focus on work for the entire duration.



"To keep your life in balance, you should resolve to work all the time you work."

You work hard to have the best possible life with your family outside of work, right? Tracy recommends setting priorities at work and ensuring that you work on the most essential tasks to achieve the perfect work/life balance.

9. Prepare Thoroughly Before You Begin

Tracy explains that preparation is key. If you want to avoid procrastination and time wasting, the best thing to do is ensure that you have every tool or resource required before you begin a task. Being prepared means you won't have to divert from the work at hand to get something you need. You can knuckle down and focus on the job at hand as soon as you are ready, with no need for distractions until the task is completed.

"One of the best ways to overcome procrastination is for you to get your mind off the huge task in front of you and focus on a single action that you can take. One step at a time."

10. Upgrade your Key Skills

Tracy explains that when you feel you lack the knowledge or ability to complete a task, you tend to procrastinate. This is due to a lack of confidence in your abilities. The best way to prevent this type of procrastination is to constantly upgrade your skills and learn. You'll never know everything you need to know, so dedicating yourself to constant learning will benefit you in the long run.

Tracy believes that learning continually is the minimum requirement for success; there are three steps you can take to reach the required mastery:

1. Read every day for 60 minutes about something relevant to your field of work.
2. Whenever an opportunity for a course or seminar arises, take it.
3. Use your driving time to listen to relevant audiobooks or podcasts.

11. Special Talents

Tracy explains that every individual has their own talents or abilities that are special and help them stand out from the rest. The key is to identify what yours are and leverage these to boost your career.

These talents can make you extremely valuable, so don't hesitate to identify and highlight them to others.



12. Identify your Constraints

Just as we all have special talents, Tracy acknowledges that we all have key constraints. One thing may stand in your way of achieving your goals. If you can identify your constraint and devise a plan to combat your weakness, you'll be able to proceed and reach your goals.

"What stops you or holds you back from eating the frogs that can really make a difference? Why aren't you at your goal already?"

13. Put Pressure on Yourself

Though this gets a bad reputation, Tracy explains that often placing pressure on yourself is crucial for success. He notes that not many people can work effectively without supervision or pressure. Most individuals depend on leaders to impose time constraints and pressure to complete tasks. If you can master the ability to pressure yourself, without relying on someone else's input, you'll find yourself making progress rapidly.

"You must choose your own frogs and then make yourself eat them in their order of importance."

14. Maximize Your Energy

Tracy explains that you and your body are essentially machines. You need to be well-oiled, fueled, and rested to perform at your best. It's not only about the physical; your mental and emotional energies also need care. If you take good care of yourself, you'll be able to work harder and longer, but if you're burned out or undernourished, you'll find your progress coming to a rapid halt. Tracy has four tips for maximizing your own personal powers:

1. Don't overwork; this, more often than not, leads to underperform.
2. Understand what your ideal work pace is.
3. Ensure that you get enough sleep daily.
4. Look after your physical and mental health; don't neglect it.



15. Motivate yourself into Action

Motivation is one of those peculiar traits that many people assume is something you either have or don't have. However, that's not true. Tracy explains that all your emotions, whether positive or negative, are directly related to how you talk to and treat yourself. We often blame the things that happen to us for how we feel, but Tracy points out that it's not the events that determine your feelings; instead, it's the way you interpret them event.

" Your version of events largely determines whether these events motivate or de-motivate you, whether they energize or de-energize you."

Tracy explains that being an optimist is the best way to stay motivated. Any people, actions, and situations that surround you can be viewed as positively as you choose. Don't interpret words or reactions negatively; instead, always look for the opportunity to good.

" You must refuse to let the unavoidable difficulties and setbacks of daily life affect your mood or emotions."

16. Get Out of Technological Time Sinks

Although we struggle to remember a life before technology and can't imagine what we'd do without it, technology can waste a lot of our time. The new era of the internet has given us the ability to communicate constantly and access information easily, whether personal or business-related. It has become an ongoing distraction that Tracy identifies as problematic.

Tracy explains that while you can remain in constant contact and be perpetually connected, this isn't necessary. In fact, it's highly beneficial to regularly disconnect from all your devices. This issue is becoming more prevalent in the workplace; being constantly accessible leads to distractions occurring more frequently than before ever.

" Remember, when you go away for a day, a week, or a month and you are out of touch with your communication devices, nothing happens. The world seems to continue revolving whether you are in continuous contact with it. Very few things are so important that they cannot wait."



17. Slice and Dice the Task

Another technique that Tracy recommends is slicing and dicing the task, or as Tracy puts it, reducing a big task to the size of a salami slice. This is an effective method for handling large tasks: you simply detail the entire task and then break it down into more manageable parts or slices. You can start with just a small slice and know that you are still making progress.

“Psychologically, you will find it easier to do a single, small piece of a large project than to start the whole job.”

Tracy explains that once you complete one slice, no matter how small, you’ll feel a sense of motivation to keep the momentum going, and you’ll move on to the next slice. It’s less overwhelming than tackling one massive task, and often, you end up getting more done this way. It’s certainly less confronting.

18. Create Large Chunks of Time

Tracy recommends setting aside large chunks of uninterrupted time to focus on important work. Schedule these time chunks in advance and commit to them. Use a planner or a calendar to map them out, and make sure every minute counts. As we discussed before, commit to only working when you are working.

“ Most of the significant work you do requires large chunks of unbroken time to complete.”

19. Develop a Sense of Urgency

Tracy’s second-to-last tip complements the one we discussed earlier about applying pressure to yourself. This tip emphasizes the importance of cultivating a sense of urgency and building momentum.

“ When you regularly take continuous action toward your most important goals, you activate the Momentum Principle of success. “

Tracy explains that the Momentum principle of success explains that although getting started may seem to take an initially large amount of energy, the energy required to keep going is going to be significantly less.



20. Single Handle every Task

“ Every great achievement of humankind has been preceded by a long period of hard, concentrated work until the job was done. Your ability to select your most important task, to begin it, and then to concentrate on it single-mindedly until it is complete is the key to high levels of performance and personal productivity.”

To single-handle a task, you are required to work only on it without any distractions from beginning to completion, focusing on only one thing at a time. It’s a matter of seeing it through to the end as rapidly as possible while avoiding any temptation to stop midway through. Tracy explains that by concentrating on only one task at a time and avoiding all distractions, you can reduce the time spent on the task by up to 50%. That’s worth doing!

21. Take it One Oil Barrel at a Time

The principle "Take It One Oil Barrel at a Time" emphasizes breaking down large tasks into smaller, manageable steps to prevent overwhelm and maintain steady progress. Brian Tracy illustrates this idea with a story about crossing the Sahara Desert, where oil barrels were strategically placed to guide travelers. Instead of focusing on the entire daunting journey, travelers could concentrate on reaching the next barrel, one step at a time. Similarly, when facing a big project or goal, focusing on the immediate next step rather than the whole picture helps build momentum and reduces stress.

By identifying smaller milestones within a larger goal and tackling them one by one, you can maintain consistency and avoid procrastination. For example, if you're preparing a presentation, break it into sub-tasks like researching, drafting, designing slides, and rehearsing. Each step becomes a "barrel" to focus on. This method teaches patience and persistence, reinforcing the idea that steady, incremental progress leads to success. Celebrating small victories along the way also keeps motivation high, ensuring you stay on track toward your goal.



Key Takeaways

- Define your goals and clarify what you want to achieve. Break them down into specific, actionable tasks.
- Plan your day the night before. Prioritize tasks to create a roadmap for the next day.
- Focus on the 20% of tasks that will yield 80% of your results. These are your "frogs."
- Identify the long-term impact of tasks. Focus on high-value tasks that lead to significant outcomes.
- Deliberately delay or delegate lower-priority tasks to concentrate on the most important ones.
- Categorize tasks as A (must-do), B (should-do), C (nice-to-do), D (delegate), or E (eliminate).
- Determine the areas where you must excel to achieve success and prioritize tasks in those areas.
- Identify the three core tasks that contribute the most to your goals and devote your energy to them.
- Gather everything you need before starting a task to ensure uninterrupted focus.
- Break large tasks into smaller, manageable steps to avoid feeling overwhelmed.
- Continuously improve your knowledge and skills to enhance productivity and efficiency.
- Focus on tasks that align with your strengths and unique abilities.
- Recognize obstacles that limit your progress and work to overcome them.
- Set personal deadlines and push yourself to achieve them.
- Work on your most important tasks when your energy and focus are at their peak.
- Use positive affirmations, visualization, and rewards to encourage action.
- Avoid distractions from email, social media, and other digital interruptions.
- Divide tasks into smaller chunks and tackle them one at a time.
- Dedicate blocks of time to focus on deep work without interruptions.
- Cultivate a habit of working quickly and efficiently to accomplish more in less time.
- Focus on one task at a time until it is 100% complete. Avoid multitasking.

This summary is not intended as a replacement for the original book, and all quotes are credited to the above-mentioned author and publisher.