

Lessons for Life

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HOWARD WIGHT

One Idea Can Change A Lifetime.

Rocks...Pebbles...Sand... Beer...and Coffee

A philosophy professor stood before his class with some items on the table in front of him. When the class began, wordlessly he picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with rocks about 2" in diameter.

He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was.

So the professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles, of course, rolled into the open areas between the rocks.

He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The professor picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else.

He then asked once more if the jar was full. The students responded with a unanimous "Yes."

The professor then produced two cans of beer from under the table and proceeded to pour their entire contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed. Then he poured a cup of coffee into the jar, and again, they laughed.

"Now," said the professor, as the laughter subsided, "I want you to recognize that this jar represents your life. The rocks are the important



Continued...

Rocks...Pebbles...Sand...Beer...and Coffee

things – your family, your partner, your health, your children – things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter – like your job, your house, your car. The sand is everything else. The small stuff.”

“If you put the sand into the jar first,” he continued, “there is no room for the pebbles or the rocks. The same goes for your life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important to you. Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness. Play with your children. Take time to get medical checkups. Take your partner out dancing. There will always be time to go to work, clean the house, give a dinner party and fix the disposal. Take care of the rocks first – the things that really matter. Set your priorities. The rest is just sand.”

One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the beer and coffee represented.

The professor smiled. “I’m glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there’s always room for a couple of beers or a cup of coffee.”

— Anonymous



How To Prevent Procrastination

- Planned procrastination is okay. Some tasks are extremely low priority or need never be done.
- Don't take on more than you can handle. Learn to say no.
- Assign a priority and deadline to each task.
- Don't be a perfectionist. Perfectionists procrastinate. Pragmatists profit. Most things don't have to be done perfectly.
- A project may be intimidating when viewed in its entirety. Slice it into smaller pieces (The Salami Technique). Get started. You only have to psyche yourself up to do one thing, not twenty. Once you get started, the next step/task is easy.
- Delegate. Learn to let go. Success is doing what you do best and delegating the rest.
- Get help. You're not alone.
- Give yourself a reward for getting it done.
- Write down reasons for doing it.
- Discuss your tendency to procrastinate with someone who you think has licked the problem.
- Get started now! Doing something does something.
- Don't fear failure. If you can do it, do it. If you can't, get help. Start now.
- Do the worst first!
- Set aside a special time for tasks on which you have been procrastinating.
- Take one task and start now.
- If you are ultimately going to do something...do it now!
- Write down the advantages of doing it and the disadvantages of not doing it.

Life is Hard by the Yard...But a Cinch by the Inch.

Keep It Simple and Sincere (KISS)

*“The most valuable of all talents
is that of never using two words
when one will do.”*

Thomas Jefferson

Have you ever in your life wished that someone had made something more complicated?

We live in an age of information overload. If you can communicate concisely and clearly, you will stand out from the crowd.

Simplify your communications. Eliminate the unnecessary and the unimportant.

Simplify your life. Eliminate the unnecessary and the unimportant.

A picture can be worth a thousand words. Use pictures, diagrams, and charts to help communicate concepts.

When I first heard the acronym, KISS, it stood for Keep It Simple Stupid. I found that to be somewhat offensive, so I changed it to stand for Keep It Simple and Sincere or Keep It Simple and Short.

What is your point? Get to it. What is the bottom line? Get to it.

The art of storytelling is a great ability. Often stories help to make a point. More often, they just waste everyone's time. Notice that I have not told a story here to help make my point. What I have written is common sense. Unfortunately, common sense is uncommon.

*Simplify.
Eliminate the Unnecessary
and the Unimportant.*

Today Is Now

Today is here. I will start with a smile, and resolve to be agreeable. I will not criticize. I refuse to waste my valuable time.

Today has one thing in which I know I am equal with others — time. All of us draw the same salary in seconds, minutes, hours.

Today I will not waste my time, because the minutes I wasted yesterday are as lost as a vanished thought.

Today I refuse to spend time worrying about what might happen. I am going to spend my time making things happen.

Today I am determined to study to improve myself, for tomorrow I may be wanted, and I must not be found lacking.

Today I am determined to do things I should do. I firmly determine to stop doing the things I should not do.

Today I begin by doing, and not wasting my time. In one week I will be miles beyond the person I am today.

Today I will not imagine what I would do if things were different. They are not different. I will make success with what material I have.

Today I will stop saying, “If I had time,” for I never will “find time” for anything — if I want time, I must take it.

Today I will act toward other people as though this might be my last day on earth. I will not wait for tomorrow. Tomorrow never comes.

— Anonymous

BOOKS! BOOKS! BOOKS!



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- ❑ **Success and Time Management.** Put yourself on the fast track to success. Now in its third printing, this book will help you figure out where you want to go and the best route to get there. It will help you focus on first things first so that you can become more productive personally and professionally. It will help you get more done in less time. One company recently purchased 200 copies for its top producers.
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