

- “What’s the ONE Thing you can do this week such that by doing it everything else would be easier or unnecessary?” And the most awesome thing happened.

- Where I’d had huge success, I had narrowed my concentration to one thing, and where my success varied, my focus had too.

- “Going small” is ignoring all the things you could do and doing what you should do. It’s recognizing that not all things matter equally and finding the things that matter most. It’s a tighter way to connect what you do with what you want. It’s realizing that extraordinary results are directly determined by how narrow you can make your focus.

- Most people think just the opposite. They think big success is time consuming and complicated. As a result, their calendars and to-do lists become overloaded and overwhelming.

- A geometric progression is like a long, long train—it starts out too slow to notice until it’s moving too fast to stop.

- So when you think about success, shoot for the moon. The moon is reachable if you prioritize everything and put all of your energy into accomplishing the most important thing. Getting extraordinary results is all about creating a domino effect in your life.

- Highly successful people know this. So every day they line up their priorities anew, find the lead domino, and whack away at it until it falls. Why does this approach work? Because extraordinary success is sequential, not simultaneous. What starts out linear becomes geometric.

- The key is over time. Success is built sequentially. It’s one thing at a time.

- The answer isn’t always clear, but that doesn’t make finding it any less important. Technological innovations, cultural shifts, and competitive forces will often dictate that a business’s ONE Thing evolve or transform. The most successful companies know this and are always asking: “What’s our ONE Thing?”

- THE SIX LIES BETWEEN YOU AND SUCCESS 1. Everything Matters Equally 2. Multitasking 3. A Disciplined Life 4. Willpower Is Always on Will-Call 5. A Balanced Life 6. Big Is Bad

- When everything feels urgent and important, everything seems equal. We become active and busy, but this doesn’t actually move us any closer to success. Activity is often unrelated to productivity, and busyness rarely takes care of business.

- Achievers operate differently. They have an eye for the essential. They pause just long enough to decide what matters and then allow what matters to drive their day. Achievers do sooner what others plan to do later and defer, perhaps indefinitely, what others do sooner.

- “The 80/20 Principle asserts that a minority of causes, inputs, or effort usually lead to a majority of the results, outputs, or rewards.” In

- Selected effort creates almost all of the rewards.

- Juran's great insight was that not everything matters equally; some things matter more than others—a lot more. A to-do list becomes a success list when you apply Pareto's Principle to it.

- Success requires that you follow the 80/20 Principle, but you don't have to stop there.

- Now, again, stop and do the math. One idea out of 100. That is Pareto to the extreme. That's thinking big, but going very small. That's applying the ONE Thing to a business challenge in a truly powerful way.

- There will always be just a few things that matter more than the rest, and out of those, one will matter most. Internalizing this concept is like being handed a magic compass. Whenever you feel lost or lacking direction, you can pull it out to remind yourself to discover what matters most.

- 1. Go small. Don't focus on being busy; focus on being productive. Allow what matters most to drive your day. 2. Go extreme. Once you've figured out what actually matters, keep asking what matters most until there is only one thing left. That core activity goes at the top of your success list. 3. Say no. Whether you say "later" or "never," the point is to say "not now" to anything else you could do until your most important work is done. 4. Don't get trapped in the "check off" game. If we believe things don't matter equally, we must act accordingly. We can't fall prey to the notion that everything has to be done, that checking things off our list is what success is all about. We can't be trapped in a game of "check off" that never produces a winner.

- We think we can, so we think we should.

- you can become successful with less discipline than you think, for one simple reason: success is about doing the right thing, not about doing everything right.

- Don't be a disciplined person. Be a person of powerful habits and use selected discipline to develop them. 2. Build one habit at a time. Success is sequential, not simultaneous. No one actually has the discipline to acquire more than one powerful new habit at a time. Super-successful people aren't superhuman at all; they've just used selected discipline to develop a few significant habits. One at a time. Over time. 3. Give each habit enough time. Stick with the discipline long enough for it to become routine. Habits, on average, take 66 days to form. Once a habit is solidly established, you can either build on that habit or, if appropriate, build another one.

- Think of willpower like the power bar on your cell phone. Every morning you start out with a full charge. As the day goes on, every time you draw on it you're using it up. So as your green bar shrinks, so does your resolve, and when it eventually goes red, you're done. Willpower has a limited battery life but can be recharged with some downtime.

- To do our best, we literally have to feed our minds, which gives new credence to the old saw, "food for thought." Foods that elevate blood sugar evenly over long periods, like complex carbohydrates and proteins, become the fuel of choice for high-achievers—literal proof that "you are what you eat."

- When our willpower runs out, we all revert to our default settings. This begs the question: What are your default settings? If your willpower is dragging, will you grab the bag of carrots or the bag of chips? Will you be up for focusing on the work at hand or down for any distraction that drops in? When your most important work is done while your willpower wanes, default will define your level of achievement. Average is often the result.

- FIG. 8 Good decisions depend on more than just wisdom and common sense.

- Most people bring won't power to their most important challenges without ever realizing that's what makes them so hard. When we don't think of resolve as a resource that gets used up, when we fail to reserve it for the things that matter most, when we don't replenish it when it's low, we are probably setting ourselves up for the toughest possible path to success. So how do you put your willpower to work? You think about it. Pay attention to it. Respect it. You make doing what matters most a priority when your willpower is its highest. In other words, you give it the time of day it deserves.

- Don't spread your willpower too thin. On any given day, you have a limited supply of willpower, so decide what matters and reserve your willpower for it. 2. Monitor your fuel gauge. Full-strength willpower requires a full tank. Never let what matters most be compromised simply because your brain was under-fueled. Eat right and regularly. 3. Time your task. Do what matters most first each day when your willpower is strongest. Maximum strength willpower means maximum success. Don't fight your willpower. Build your days around how it works and let it do its part to build your life. Willpower may not be on willcall, but when you use it first on what matters most, you can always count on it.

- The act of living a full life by giving time to what matters is a balancing act. Extraordinary results require focused attention and time. Time on one thing means time away from another. This makes balance impossible.

- Time waits for no one. Push something to an extreme and postponement can become permanent.

- To achieve an extraordinary result you must choose what matters most and give it all the time it demands. This requires getting extremely out of balance in relation to all other work issues, with only infrequent counterbalancing to address them.

- When you're supposed to be working, work, and when you're supposed to be playing, play. It's a weird tightrope you're walking, but it's only when you get your priorities mixed up that things fall apart.

- Your work life is divided into two distinct areas—what matters most and everything else. You will have to take what matters to the extremes and be okay with what happens to the rest. Professional success requires it.

- Start leading a counterbalanced life. Let the right things take precedence when they should and get to the rest when you can. An extraordinary life is a counterbalancing act.

- Believing in big frees you to ask different questions, follow different paths, and try new things. This opens the doors to possibilities that until now only lived inside you.

## 10x value

- Thinking big is essential to extraordinary results. Success requires action, and action requires thought. But here's the catch—the only actions that become springboards to succeeding big are those informed by big thinking to begin with. Make this connection, and the importance of how big you think begins to sink in.

- FIG. 13 Thinking informs actions and actions determine outcomes.

- Every level of achievement requires its own combination of what you do, how you do it, and who you do it with. The trouble is that the combination of what, how, and who that gets you to one level of success won't naturally evolve to a better combination that leads to the next level of success. Doing something one way doesn't always lay the foundation for doing something better, nor does a relationship with one person automatically set the stage for a more successful relationship with another. It's unfortunate, but these things don't build on each other. If you learn to do something one way, and with one set of relationships, that may work fine until you want to achieve more. It's then that you'll discover you've created an artificial ceiling of achievement for yourself that may be too hard to break through. In effect, you've boxed yourself in when there is a simple way to avoid it. Think as big as you possibly can and base what you do, how you do it, and who you do it with on succeeding at that level.

- Don't fear big. Fear mediocrity. Fear waste. Fear the lack of living to your fullest. When we fear big, we either consciously or subconsciously work against it. We either run toward lesser outcomes and opportunities or we simply run away from the big ones. If courage isn't the absence of fear, but moving past it, then thinking big isn't the absence of doubts, but moving past them. Only living big will let you experience your true life and work potential.

- A good rule of thumb is to double down everywhere in your life. If your goal is ten, ask the question: "How can I reach 20?"

- Don't order from the menu.

- If you still can't imagine it, go study people who have already achieved it. What are the models, systems, habits, and relationships of other people who have found the answer? As much as we'd like to believe we're all different, what consistently works for others will almost always work for us.

- Extraordinary results aren't built solely on extraordinary results. They're built on failure too. In fact, it would be accurate to say that we fail our way to success. When we fail, we stop, ask what we need to do to succeed, learn from our mistakes, and grow. Don't be afraid to fail.

- "Be careful how you interpret the world; it is like that." —Erich Heller

- I got in shape physically and spiritually and stayed there. And last, I started doing less. Yes, less. Intentionally, purposefully less. I was looser than ever, way laid back for me, and breathing. I challenged the axioms of success, and guess what? I became more successful than I ever dreamed possible and felt better than I'd ever felt in my life.

- I discovered that we can't manage time, and that the key to success isn't in all the things we do but in the handful of things we do well.

- Mark Twain agreed with Carnegie and described it this way: The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret to getting started is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into small manageable tasks and then starting on the first one.

- Voltaire once wrote, "Judge a man by his questions rather than his answers." Sir Francis Bacon added, "A prudent question is one-half of wisdom." Indira Gandhi concluded that "the power to question is the basis of all human progress." Great questions are clearly the quickest path to great answers.

- Nancy Willard, who wrote, "Sometimes questions are more important than answers."

- One of the most empowering moments of my life came when I realized that life is a question and how we live it is our answer. How we phrase the questions we ask ourselves determines the answers that eventually become our life.

Victor Frankl

- FIG. 15 The Focusing Question is a big-picture map and small-focus compass.

- Powered by the Focusing Question, your actions become a natural progression of building one right thing on top of the previous right thing. When this happens, you're in position to experience the power of the domino effect.

- "What's the ONE Thing I can do / such that by doing it / everything else will be easier or unnecessary?"

- Most people struggle to comprehend how many things don't need to be done, if they would just start by doing the right thing.

- The Focusing Question asks you to find the first domino and focus on it exclusively until you knock it over. Once you've done that, you'll discover a line of dominoes behind it either ready to fall or already down.

- The Focusing Question is a double-duty question. It comes in two forms: big picture and small focus. One is about finding the right direction in life and the other is about finding the right action.

- The Big-Picture Question: "What's my ONE Thing?" Use it to develop a vision for your life and the direction for your career or company; it is your strategic compass. It also works when considering what you want to master, what you want to give to others and your community, and how you want to be remembered. It keeps your relationships with friends, family, and colleagues in perspective and your daily actions on track.

- The Small-Focus Question: "What's my ONE Thing right now?" Use this when you first wake up and throughout the day. It keeps you focused on your most important work and, whenever you need it, helps you find the "levered action" or first domino in any activity. The small-focus question prepares you for the most productive workweek possible. It's effective in your

personal life too, keeping you attentive to your most important immediate needs, as well as those of the most important people in your life.

- The Focusing Question can direct you to your ONE Thing in the different areas of your life. Simply reframe the Focusing Question by inserting your area of focus. You can also include a time frame—such as “right now” or “this year”—to give your answer the appropriate level of immediacy, or “in five years” or “someday” to find a big-picture answer that points you at outcomes to aim for.

- “Until my ONE Thing is done—everything else is a distraction.”

- “People do not decide their futures, they decide their habits and their habits decide their futures.” —F. M. Alexander

- Quadrant 1. Big & Specific: “What can I do to double sales in six months?” Now you have all the elements of a Great Question. It’s a big goal and it’s specific. You’re doubling sales, and that’s not easy. You also have a time frame of six months, which will be a challenge. You’ll need a big answer.

- “What’s the ONE Thing I can do to double sales in six months such that by doing it everything else will be easier or unnecessary?” Turning it into the Focusing Question goes to the heart of success by forcing you to identify what absolutely matters most and start there. Why? Because that’s where big success starts too.

- Answers come in three categories: doable, stretch, and possibility.

- A Great Answer is essentially a new answer. It is a leap across all current answers in search of the next one and is found in two steps. The first is the same as when you stretch. You uncover the best research and study the highest achievers. Anytime you don’t know the answer, your answer is to go find your answer.

- The research and experience of others is the best place to start when looking for your answer. Armed with this knowledge, you can establish a benchmark, the current high-water mark for all that is known and being done. With a stretch approach this was your maximum, but now it is your minimum. It’s not all you’ll do, but it becomes the hilltop where you’ll stand to see if you can spot what might come next. This is called trending, and it’s the second step. You’re looking for the next thing you can do in the same direction that the best performers are heading or, if necessary, in an entirely new direction.

- Think big and specific. Setting a goal you intend to achieve is like asking a question.

- Think possibilities. Setting a doable goal is almost like creating a task to check off your list. A stretch goal is more challenging. It aims you at the edge of your current abilities; you have to stretch to reach it. The best goal explores what’s possible. When you see people and businesses that have undergone transformations, this is where they live.

- “Even if you’re on the right track, you’ll get run over if you just sit there.” —Will Rogers

- Your big ONE Thing is your purpose and your small ONE Thing is the priority you take action on to achieve it.

- Think of purpose, priority, and productivity as three parts of an iceberg. With typically only 1/9 of an iceberg above water, whatever you see is just the tip of everything that is there. This is exactly how productivity, priority, and purpose are related. What you see is determined by what you don't.

- "Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself." —George Bernard Shaw

- Who we are and where we want to go determine what we do and what we accomplish.

- when achieving happiness, any end you seek will only create happiness for you through the means it takes to achieve it.

- Discover your Big Why. Discover your purpose by asking yourself what drives you. What's the thing that gets you up in the morning and keeps you going when you're tired and worn down? I sometimes refer to this as your "Big Why." It's why you're excited with your life. It's why you're doing what you're doing.

- "Purpose" may sound heavy, but it doesn't have to be. Think of it as simply the ONE Thing you want your life to be about more than any other.

- For me, it looks like this: "My purpose is to help people live their greatest life possible through my teaching, coaching, and writing." So, then what does my life look like?

- What I teach is what I then coach and is supported by what I write.

- To be precise, the word is priority—not priorities—and it originated in the 14th century from the Latin prior, meaning "first." If something mattered the most it was a "priority." Curiously, priority remained unpluralized until around the 20th century, when the world apparently demoted it to mean generally "something that matters" and the plural "priorities" appeared. With the loss of its initial intent, a wide variety of sayings like "most pressing matter," "prime concern," and "on the front burner" pitched in to recapture the essence of the original. Today, we elevate priority to its former meaning by adding "highest," "top," "first," "main," and "most important" in front of it. It would seem priority has traveled an interesting road.

- Whenever I teach goal setting I make it my top priority to show how a goal and a priority work together. I do this by asking, "Why do we set goals and create plans?" In spite of all the good answers I get, the truth is we have goals and plans for only one reason—to be appropriate in the moments of our lives that matter.

- If you're offered a choice of \$100 today or \$200 next year, which would you choose? The \$200, right? You would if your goal were to make the most money from the opportunity. Strangely, most people don't make that choice. Economists have long known that even though people prefer big rewards over small ones, they have an even stronger preference for present rewards over future ones—even when the future rewards are MUCH BIGGER. It's an ordinary occurrence, oddly named hyperbolic discounting—the farther away a reward is in the future, the smaller the immediate motivation to achieve it.

- By thinking through the filter of Goal Setting to the Now, you set a future goal and then methodically drill down to what you should be doing right now. It can be a little like a Russian

matryoshka doll in that your ONE Thing “right now” is nested inside your ONE Thing today, which is nested inside your ONE Thing this week, which is nested inside your ONE Thing this month.... It’s how a small thing can actually build up to a big one.

- Whenever I teach productivity I always start by asking, “What type of time-managing system do you use?” The answers are as varied as the number of people in the room: paper calendar, electronic calendar, Day-Timer, At-A-Glance weekly planner ... you name it and I hear it. I then ask, “So how did you choose yours?” The reasons cited come in every shape, size, color, price, and criteria imaginable. But the students invariably describe the format, not the function—what they are, not how they work. So when I say, “That’s great, but what kind of system do you use?” the answer is always the same: “What do you mean?” “Well, if everyone has the same amount of time and yet some earn more than others,” I ask, “can we then say that it’s how we use our time that determines the money we make?” Everyone always agrees, so I continue: “If this is true, that time is money, then the best way to describe a time-managing system might just be by the money it makes. So, do you think you’re using the \$10,000-a-year system? The \$20,000-a-year system? The \$50,000-, \$100,000-, or \$500,000-a-year system? Are you using the \$1,000,000-plus system?” Silence. Until inevitably someone asks, “How do we know?” To which I reply, “How much do you make?” If money is a metaphor for producing results,

- Productive people get more done, achieve better results, and earn far more in their hours than the rest. They do so because they devote maximum time to being productive on their top priority, their ONE Thing. They time block their ONE Thing and then protect their time blocks with a vengeance.

- The key to making this work is to block time as early in your day as you possibly can. Give yourself 30 minutes to an hour to take care of morning priorities, then move to your ONE Thing.

- normal business culture gets in the way of the very productivity it seeks because of the way people traditionally schedule their time

- To experience extraordinary results, be a maker in the morning and a manager in the afternoon.

- As Walter Elliot said, “Perseverance is not a long race; it is many short races one after another.”

- The toughest part is navigating a high-level request. How do you say no to anyone important—your boss, a key client, your mom—who asks you to do something with a high sense of urgency? One way is to say yes and then ask, “If I have that done by [a specific time in the future], would that work?” Most often, these requests are more about an immediate need to hand a task off than about a need for it to be done immediately,

- When I first began to time block, the most effective thing I did was to put up a sheet of paper that said, “Until My ONE Thing Is Done—Everything Else Is A Distraction!”



- Sweep for mines. Turn off your phone, shut down your e-mail, and exit your Internet browser. Your most important work deserves 100 percent of your attention.
- Enlist support. Tell those most likely to seek you out what you're doing and when you'll be available. It's amazing how accommodating others are when they see the big picture and know when they can access you.
- The people who achieve extraordinary results don't achieve them by working more hours. They achieve them by getting more done in the hours they work.
- "Nobody who ever gave his best regretted it." —George Halas
- I believe the healthy view of mastery means giving the best you have to become the best you can be at your most important work.
- Since there is always another level to learn, mastery actually means you're a master of what you know and an apprentice of what you don't. In other words, we become masters of what is behind us and apprentices for what is ahead.
- When coaching top performers, I often ask, "Are you doing this to simply do the best you can do, or are you doing this to do it the best it can be done?"
- Highly productive people don't accept the limitations of their natural approach as the final word on their success. When they hit a ceiling of achievement, they look for new models and systems, better ways to do things to push them through. They pause just long enough to examine their options, they pick the best one, and then they're right back at
- You can't put limits on what you'll do. You have to be open to new ideas and new ways of doing things if you want breakthroughs in your life.
- The Purposeful person follows the simple rule that "a different result requires doing something different." Make this your mantra and breakthroughs become possible.
- An accountability partner provides frank, objective feedback on your performance, creates an ongoing expectation for productive progress, and can provide critical brainstorming or even expertise when needed.
- I discussed Dr. Gail Matthews's research that individuals with written goals were 39.5 percent more likely to succeed. But there's more to the story. Individuals who wrote their goals and sent progress reports to friends were 76.7 percent more likely to achieve them.
- Ericsson's research on expert performance confirms the same relationship between elite performance and coaching. He observed that "the single most important difference between these amateurs and the three groups of elite performers is that the future elite performers seek out teachers and coaches and engage in supervised training, whereas the amateurs rarely engage in similar types of practice."
- Commit to be your best. Extraordinary results happen only when you give the best you have to become the best you can be at your most important work. This is, in essence, the path to mastery—and because mastery takes time, it takes a commitment to achieve it. 2. Be

purposeful about your ONE Thing. Move from “E” to “P.” Go on a quest for the models and systems that can take you the farthest. Don’t just settle for what comes naturally—be open to new thinking, new skills, and new relationships. If the path of mastery is a commitment to be your best, being purposeful is a commitment to adopt the best possible approach. 3. Take ownership of your outcomes. If extraordinary results are what you want, being a victim won’t work. Change occurs only when you’re accountable. So stay out of the passenger seat and always choose the driver’s side. 4. Find a coach. You’ll be hard-pressed to find anyone who achieves extraordinary results without one. Remember, we’re not talking about ordinary results—extraordinary is what we’re after. That kind of productivity eludes most, but it doesn’t have to. When you time block your most important priority, protect your time block, and then work your time block as effectively as possible, you’ll be as productive as you can be. You’ll be living the power of The ONE Thing. Now you just have to avoid getting hijacked.

- THE FOUR THIEVES OF PRODUCTIVITY 1. Inability to Say “No” 2. Fear of Chaos 3. Poor Health Habits 4. Environment Doesn’t Support Your Goals

- Seth Godin says, “You can say no with respect, you can say no promptly, and you can say no with a lead to someone who might say yes. But just saying yes because you can’t bear the short-term pain of saying no is not going to help you do the work.”

- Gilovich and Medvec in 1994 wrote, “When people look back on their lives, it is the things they have not done that generate the greatest regret.... People’s actions may be troublesome initially; it is their inactions that plague them most with long-term feelings of regret.”