

# Do the Hard Things First

By Kate Monroe, CEO



We don't want to do the hard things. We like to do the enjoyable things. If something isn't enjoyable, then we at least want it to be easy.

Yet, the enjoyable things often aren't very helpful. And the easy things usually don't provide a lot of return for our time.

**The ability to make yourself do the hard things is a big determiner of how successful you'll be.**

For example:

- Squats are hard. Leg extensions are easy. Guess which is more effective for strengthening your legs.
- Cold calling expired listings is hard. Holding an open house is easy. Guess which is more effective for making money as a real estate agent.
- Sweeping a floor is easy. Scrubbing a floor on your hands and knees is hard. You already know which is going to clean your floor more effectively.

**Consider these ideas:**

1. **You have more energy and focus early in the day.** It's easier to do challenging things earlier in the day. You're more effective at 9:00 AM than you are at 3:00 PM. Attack the hard thing when you're fresh. It's only going to be more challenging later in the day.
2. **You can spend more time on the hard thing. If you wait until later to do the hard thing, you might run out of time to complete it.** Since the hard thing is often the most important thing, you should spend enough time on it to complete it.
3. **The rest of the day is more enjoyable.** If you have something unpleasant hanging over your head all day, you just can't enjoy the day as much. Get the hard thing off your plate, so you can enjoy the remainder of your day.

- “If it's your job to eat a frog, it's best to do it first thing in the morning. And if it's your job to eat two frogs, it's best to eat the biggest one first.” - Mark Twain

4. **It builds self-esteem and confidence.** Everyone else avoids the hard things. Be the person that attacks them. You'll feel great about yourself and know that you can do anything that needs to be done.

- **Your potential increases greatly when you can reliably get yourself to do unenjoyable tasks.**

5. **It can help your career.** Once you're known as the person that can do the hard things, you'll be highly respected and considered reliable. Most people have excuses for not doing the hard thing.

6. **Avoid thinking too much about it.** It's best to get started on your hard thing without spending too much time thinking about it. It's like eating the frog. Just eat it. You don't want to stare at it all day. The frog only becomes bigger and uglier over time.

7. **Decide what your “frog” is for the day.** The night before, determine what your most awful task is for the next day. Schedule it as early in the day as possible. When the time comes, attack that frog with everything you've got.

Some tasks are just unpleasant. There are even unpleasant tasks which provide little value but must be done. **It's best to get your unpleasant tasks done as soon as possible.**

If the unpleasant task is high value, it deserves to be accomplished first. If the unpleasant task is low-value, just get it out of the way as soon as you can.

If you can reliably do the hard things first, you'll find that you're much more successful. You'll also be happier, because you won't have to stress about those hard things more than necessary.