

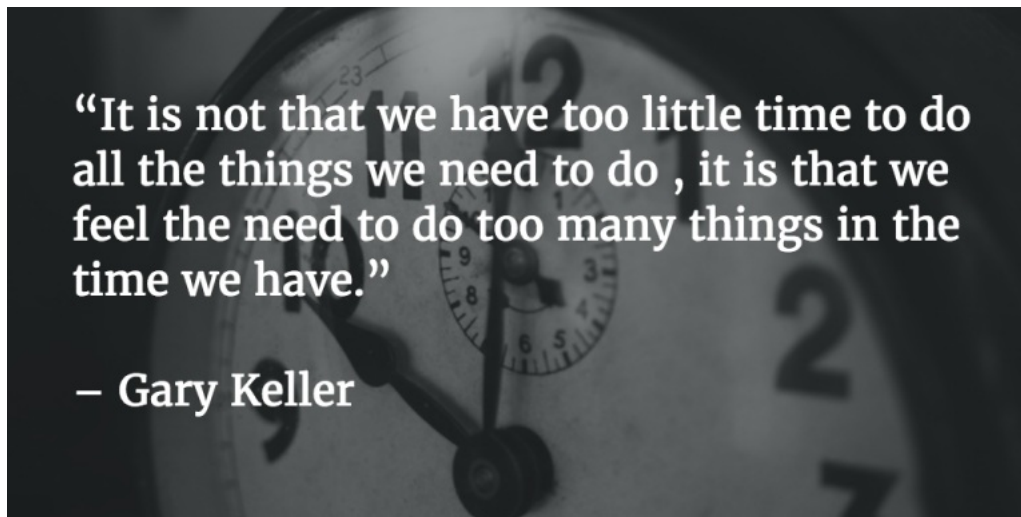
The ONE Thing Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/the-one-thing-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *The ONE Thing* gives you a very simple approach to productivity, based around a single question, to help you have less clutter, distractions and stress, and more focus, energy and success.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Gary Keller has been running one of the world’s largest real estate companies in the world for the past 30 years. Apparently, that wasn’t enough, so he had to write a New York Times bestseller.

It’s called *The ONE Thing* and here are the 3 biggest takeaways from it:

1. You can figure out your long- and short-term priorities and goals with a single question.
2. In order to get focused, you have to learn how to say no.
3. Never sacrifice your personal life for work.

Lesson 1: You only need one question to figure out your priorities, both long-term and short-term.

If you only take away a single sentence from this book, let it be this one:

“What’s the ONE thing I can do, such that by doing it everything else will become easier or unnecessary?”

That's what Keller calls the focusing question and it's the core concept around which the entire book is built. Much like Tim Ferriss, Keller is a big fan of the 80/20 or Pareto principle, where 20% of the input gives you 80% of the results.

Not all items on your to-do list are created equal, so in order to make the biggest leaps in the shortest amount of time, you'd be best off ruthlessly prioritizing them.

The beauty of the way this question is asked is that sets you up for focus on a single thing, while simultaneously picking the priority from the top of the food chain.

Keller suggests to ask this question on two levels: **macro and micro**.

If your ultimate goal in life is to fly a plane across the Atlantic, then the answer to the focusing on a macro level would most likely be to get a pilot's license – it will make actually flying a plane a lot easier.

But on a micro level, i.e. "What's the ONE thing I can do *right now*, such that...", that would probably mean to sign up for flying lessons.

Once you have found the answer to the focusing question on a macro level, all you have to do whenever you find yourself in "what-should-I-do-next-land", just ask it again on a micro level, and you'll know what to do.

One helps you figure out the direction of your life, the other the next action you have to take to get there.

Lesson 2: Getting focused means learning to say no.

I wish I had a dime for every time anyone quoted Steve Jobs on something, because I'd probably be richer than the man himself was within a year.

When he returned to Apple he cut the product lineup from 350 to 10. He said no 340 times. That's a lot of no's. But look at what the few Apple products we know today have become, and you'll see he was right.

Asking the focusing question is the easy part. Saying no to all your other seemingly important and urgent to-do's is what's hard.

The best way to make saying no easy is to **make yourself unnecessary in the first place**. For example if employees bother you with the same questions, create an FAQ and direct people to that.

Try to reduce incoming requests and low-level distractions, so you won't have to say no as often, and if you do, make sure you give people a time when they'll have their answer.

Lesson 3: Never sacrifice your personal life for your work.

A great quote to make a great point.

“Imagine life is a game in which you are juggling five balls. The balls are called work, family, health, friends, and integrity. And you’re keeping all of them in the air. But one day you finally come to understand that work is a rubber ball. If you drop it, it will bounce back. The other four balls...are made of glass. If you drop one of these, it will be irrevocably scuffed, nicked, perhaps even shattered.” – James Patterson

You can always make another phone call, send another pitch, or catch up on yesterday’s work tomorrow. But you can never undo a missed dance recital, a forgotten date or chronic back pain.

Work priorities number 2, 3, and 17 are always negotiable and can be put off or sometimes not done at all. **As long as you are working on your ONE thing, you’re making sure that *when you’re working, you’re doing what’s most important.***

That more than compensates for having to take off early, allowing yourself enough sleep and taking extra time to buy flowers on the way home.

After all, what good is it to achieve your ONE thing when there’s no one left to share the story of how you got there with?

The ONE Thing Review

You could argue that this book only has one gear and that you could pull out the focusing question and be done with it. But then you’d miss the point. While the focusing question is the core concept, the chapters around it are like supporting pillars, making the whole thing come together in a big, beautiful picture that makes a lot more sense than the question alone.

What else can you learn from the blinks?

- Why Arthur Guinness signed a 9,000 year lease before brewing a single drop of beer
- How the Pareto principle got its name
- Mark Twain’s advice on The ONE Thing
- The secret of a disciplined life and how Michael Phelps succeeded in spite of ADHD
- How much time you spend every day just recovering from interruptions (it’s a LOT)
- Why willpower is like a fuel tank and how that cost some prisoners their freedom
- A question that will really throw you off your goal-setting game and make you think
- What to do with all the other urgent tasks while working on your ONE Thing

Who would I recommend The ONE Thing summary to?

The 20 year old college student, who noticed if she does all of her tasks in chronological order, she misses deadlines sometimes, the 47 year old executive, who’s trying hard to manage it all, but sometimes sees personal events slip through the cracks, and anyone

who has a tough time to say no.

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