

"The One Thing" - Gary Keller

- Be like a postage stamp; stick to one thing until you get there. - Josh Billings
- Results went through the roof for the author's organization from asking this one question to his team: "What's the ONE thing you can do this week such that by doing it would make everything else easier or unnecessary?"
- Interesting pattern author noticed in his life: "Where I had huge success, I narrowed my concentration to one thing, and where my success varied, my focus had too."
- Everyone has the same number of hours in a day. So why do some people seem to get more done?
- Time is the currency of achievement. (Find the One Thing so you do not waste it)
- Successful people make getting to the heart of things the heart of their approach.
- "Going small" is ignoring the things you could do and doing on what you should do.
- Not all things matter equally so find the things which matter most.
- Extraordinary results are directly determined by how narrow you can make your focus.
- You want achievement to add up, but that actually takes subtraction, not addition.
- You need to do fewer things for effect rather than more things with side effects.
- The Domino Effect - A 2-inch domino can knock over a domino 50% larger. By the 10th domino, it is as large as Peyton Manning and by the 31st it is larger than Mount Everest.
- All of your success is reachable if you prioritize and put all of your energy into the most important thing.
- Success is more complicated than toppling dominoes. That is why successful people everyday will line up their priorities anew, find the lead domino and whack away at it until it falls.
- Extraordinary success is sequential, not simultaneous. Do the right thing and then do the next right thing.
- Success builds on success.

- The key is time. Success is built sequentially. One right thing at a time.
- The answer to finding the One Thing isn't always clear, but that doesn't make finding it any less important.
- Many things can be important but only One can be the most important.
- No one is self-made. No one succeeds alone. No one.
- You must be single-minded. Drive for the one thing on which you have decided. - General Patton
- Success demands singleness of purpose. - Vince Lombardi
- It ain't what you know that gets you in trouble. It's what you know for sure that just ain't so. - Mark Twain
- Life is too short to chase unicorns. 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.
- The six lies are highways that ends in bunny trails. Fool's gold that divert us from the mother lode. Must put these lies to bed to reach your potential.
- Things which matter most should never be at the mercy of things which matter least. - Goethe
- Equality is a lie (in terms of achievement)
- When faced with too much clutter the best decision gets traded for any decision.
- Activity is often unrelated to productivity and busyness rarely takes care of business.
- The things that are most important don't always scream the loudest. - Bob Hawke
- Not everything matters equally, and success isn't a game won by whoever does the most.
- Achievers have an eye for the essential. They do sooner, what others plan to do later and defer what others do sooner. Achievers always work from a clear sense of priority.
- To-do lists inherently lack the intent of success. Instead, you need a success list that is purposefully created around extraordinary results.

- To-do lists tend to be long, success lists tend to be short. One pulls in all directions, one pulls in one specific direction.
- If a list isn't built around success that it isn't where it will take you.
- The 80/20 principle says the minority of your efforts lead to the majority of your results.
- A to-do list becomes a success list when you prioritize it.
- Don't focus on being busy. Focus on being productive. Allow what matters most to drive your day.
- Say "no" or "not now", "later" on things until your most important things are done.
- To do two things at once is to do neither. - Publilius Syrus
- Multitasking is merely the opportunity to screw up more than one thing at a time. - Steve Uzzell
- You can perform two tasks at once, such as walking and chewing gum, but you can only focus on one task at a time.
- The problem of trying to focus on two things at once shows up as the complexity of the tasks increases.
- Multitasking slows us down and makes us slower witted.
- Professionals such as pilots and surgeons we expect total concentration from but we live our lives on another standard where lack of focus is abundant.
- Why would we ever tolerate multitasking when we're doing our most important work?
- Research shows we lose as much as a third of our work day to distractions.
- Figure out what matters most in the moment and give it your full attention.
- The pervasive idea is that a successful person must have a very disciplined life. It's a lie. The truth is we do not need any more discipline than we already have. *We just need to direct and manage it a little better.*
- Success is not a marathon of disciplined action. Success is actually a short race, a sprint fueled by discipline just long enough for habit to kick in and take over.
- Instead of needing more discipline to get results we actually need better habits. Then we need just enough discipline to build the habit.
- You can actually become more successful with less discipline for this reason: *success is about doing the right thing, not about doing everything right.*

- The trick success is to choose the right habit and bring just enough discipline to establish it.
- The fact of the matter is that aiming discipline at the right habit gives you license to be less disciplined in other areas. *When you do the right thing, it can liberate you from having to monitor everything.*
- Once a new behavior becomes a habit, it takes less discipline to maintain.
- The hard stuff becomes habit, and habit makes the hard stuff easy.
- In a study, it found that it takes an average of 66 days to acquire a new habit to automaticity. (Contradicts self-help suggestions that it takes 21 days to make a change, science does not support this.)
- Don't be a "disciplined person". Be a person of powerful habits and use selected energy to develop them.
- Build one habit at a time. Success is sequential not simultaneous. Super successful people aren't super human, they've developed a few significant habits, one at a time, over time
- Harness the discipline to build the right habit and extraordinary results will find you.
- Why would you ever willingly do something the hard way? Most of us do this everyday.
- The oft quoted "Where there's a will there's a way" has probably misled as many as it has helped.
- Willpower is always on will-call is a lie.
- In a famous study, willpower proved to be a big indicator of future success.
- *"When you have your will you get your way."*
- Willpower has a limited battery life but can be recharged with some down time.
- The more we use our mind, the less minding power we have. Willpower is like a fast twitch muscle that gets tired and needs rest; has a lot of raw power but little endurance.
- Studies conclude willpower is a mental muscle that is prone to fatigue. Diet actually helps replenish willpower. Complex carbohydrates and proteins are the fuel of high achievers.
- When our willpower runs out, we all revert to our default settings. (Not necessarily a good thing)
- When your most important work is done while your willpower wanes, default will define your level of achievement. Average is often the result.

- We lose our willpower because we *don't* think about it. Without appreciating that it can come and go we let it do exactly that.
- Pay attention to your willpower. Make doing what matters most a priority when your will power is at its highest.
- When it comes to willpower, timing is everything.
- Do your most important work, your ONE thing, early.
- A balanced life is a lie. Extraordinary results require focused attention and time. Time on one thing means time away from another. This makes balance impossible.
- Living in the middle prevents you from making extraordinary time commitments to anything. Prevents extraordinary results as they require time.
- Knowing when to pursue the middle and when to pursue the extremes is in essence the true beginning of wisdom. Extraordinary results are achieved by this negotiation with your time.
- Magic never happens in the middle, magic happens in the extremes.
- Time waits for no one. Push something to an extreme and postponement can become permanent.
- When you gamble with your time, you may be placing a bet you can't cover.
- Counterbalancing done well gives the illusion of balance.
- The idea of counterbalancing is that you never go so far that you cannot find your way back.
- Your personal life requires tight counterbalancing. Awareness is an essential ingredient in your personal life.
- Imagine life is a game of juggling five balls. The balls are called work, family, health, friends, and integrity. Caveat: work is a rubber ball that will bounce back if you drop it, the other balls are all made of glass.
- The question of balance is really a question of priority. It's only when you get your priorities mixed up that things fall apart.
- None of us know our limits. None of us know our ultimate ceiling for our potential, so it is a waste of time worrying about it.
- Thinking big is essential to extraordinary results. Thinking informs actions and actions determine outcomes.
- What you build today will either empower or restrict you tomorrow.
- Achievement and abundance show up because they're the natural outcomes of doing the right things with no limits attached.

- Don't fear big. Fear mediocrity. Fear waste. Fear the lack of living to your fullest.
- Ask bigger questions. A good rule of thumb is to double down everywhere in your life. Set a goal so far above what you want that you'll be building a plan that practically guarantees your original goal.
- We fail our way to success.
- Success comes down to this: being appropriate in the moments of your life. "This is where I'm meant to right now, doing exactly what I'm doing."
- There is an art to clearing away the clutter and focusing on what matters most. It is simple and it is transferrable. It just requires the courage to take a different approach. - George Anders
- Put all your eggs in one basket and then watch the basket. It is trying to carry too many baskets that breaks all of the eggs. - Andrew Carnegie
- Answers come from questions and the quality of any answer is directly determined by the quality of the question. Ask the wrong question, get the wrong answer.
- Questions engage our critical thinking.
- Sometimes questions are more important than the answers. - Nancy Willard
- Anyone who seeks to live an uncommon life eventually discovers there is no choice but to seek an uncommon approach to living it.
- **FOCUS QUESTION: What's the ONE THING I can do such that by doing it everything else would be easier or unnecessary?**
- Where am I going? What must I do right now to be on the path to getting to the big picture? Where's the bull's-eye?
 - These questions offer both a map for the big picture and a compass for your next smallest move.
- Extraordinary results are rarely happenstance. They come by the choices we make and the actions we take.
- The focus question drives you to make the best decision. It ignores what is doable and drills down to what is necessary, to what matters. It leads you to your first domino.
- Keep asking yourself the focus question, day after day.
- The Focusing Question is the most powerful success habit we can have.
- Ask this question to every area of your life; family, spiritual, physical, personal, work, etc.
- Put this sign on my desk: "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. - FM Alexander
- Great questions are Big and Specific. (as in "big picture")
- Low goals don't require extraordinary actions so they rarely lead to extraordinary results.
- When you ask a great question you are in essence pursuing a great goal.
- Extraordinary results require a Great Answer.
- A big answer is never in plain view, nor is the path to finding it laid out for you.
- Look for "bright spots"
- The research and experience of others is the best place to start when looking for your answer.
- The best answers rarely come from an ordinary process.
- A new answer usually requires a new behavior.
- From the One Thing comes purpose, priority, and productivity.
- Productivity is driven by purpose and priority.
- Great businesses are built on one productive person at a time. (Teams too)
- Our purpose sets our priority and our priority determines the productivity our actions produce.
- A life lived on purpose is the most powerful of all; and the happiest.
- Happiness happens on the way to fulfillment.
- 5 factors that contribute to our happiness:
 - 1. Positive emotion & pleasure
 - 2. Achievement
 - 3. Engagement
 - 4. Relationships
 - 5. Meaning
- When our daily actions fulfill a bigger purpose, the most powerful and enduring happiness can happen.
- The prescription for extraordinary results is knowing what matters to you and taking daily doses of action in alignment with it.
- Planning is bringing the future to the present so that you can do something about it now. - Alan Lakein
- Purpose without priority is powerless.
- The reason most people never achieve their goals is because they haven't connected their actions today to all of the tomorrows that will take them where they want to go.

- Connect today to all of your tomorrows.
- In a study, students who visualized the process to getting an A performed better than students who only focused on the grade itself; the result.
- Productivity isn't about being a workhorse, keeping busy or burning the midnight oil... It's more about priorities, planning, and fiercely protecting your time. - Margarita Tartakovsky
- Productive action transforms lives.
- The most successful people are the most productive people. They devote maximum time to being productive to their One Thing. They protect their time blocks with a vengeance.
- Time blocking is a very results oriented way of viewing and using time. It's a way of making sure that what has to be done *gets* done.
- If disproportionate results come from one activity, then you must give that one activity disproportionate time.
- The most productive people work on event time. They don't quit until their One Thing is done.
- Spend a minimum of four hours a day working on your One Thing.
- Efficiency is doing the thing right. Effectiveness is doing the right thing. - Peter Drucker
- Jerry Seinfeld's advice to an aspiring comedian: "write one joke everyday. Put a red X on the calendar for everyday you work on your craft. You create a chain of days. Your job becomes this: *don't break the chain.*"
- Perseverance is not a long race; it is many short races one after another. - Walter Elliott
- Momentum and motivation start to take over as you "grow the chain."
- There is magic in knocking down your most important domino day after day.
- Time blocking isn't hard, protecting it is. The world doesn't know your purpose and priorities and isn't responsible for them; you are.
- The best way to protect your time blocks is to adopt the mindset that they can't be moved. On urgent issues that **MUST** be dealt with that require you to put your One Thing on hold: "If you erase, you must replace."
- Extraordinary results become possible when where you want to go is completely aligned with what you do today. Tap into your purpose and let that clarity dictate your priorities.
- If your time blocking were on trial, would there be enough evidence to convict 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.
- Time blocking is one thing, effective time blocking is another.
- The Three Commitments:
 - 1. Mastery - a commitment to becoming your best.
 - 2. Seek the very best ways of doing things - nothing is more futile than doing your best using an approach that can't deliver results equal to your effort. (Move from "E" to "P", Entrepreneurial to Purposeful)
 - 3. Be held accountable to do everything you can to achieve your One Thing.
- Mastery is a way of thinking, a way of acting, and a journey you experience. Mastery is accessible to anyone willing to take that journey.
- The journey of mastery never ends.
- We become masters of what is behind us and apprentices for what is ahead. (Much like a White belt in Karate progressing to a Black belt.)
- More than anything else, expertise tracks with hours invested.
- Are you doing this simply to do the best you can do, or are you doing this to do it the best it can be done?
- A purposeful person follows the simple rule: "A different result requires doing something different." - Make this your mantra and breakthroughs become possible.
- Do what comes unnatural.
- Taking complete ownership of your outcomes by holding no one but yourself responsible for them is the most powerful thing you can do to drive your success.
- Accountable people bring their best to whatever it takes, without reservation.
- Accountable people achieve results others only dream of.
- Highly successful people are clear about their role in the events of your life. They don't fear reality. They seek it, acknowledge it, and own it.
- Focus is matter of deciding what things your not going to do. - John Carmack
- The Four Thieves of Productivity:
 - 1. Inability to say no
 - 2. Fear of Chaos
 - 3. Poor Health Habits
 - 4. Environment doesn't your goals

- One yes must be defended by a 1000 no's.
- when you say yes to something it is imperative that you understand what you are saying no to.
- One-half of knowing what you want is knowing what you must give up to get it.
- Saying yes to everyone is the same thing as saying yes to nothing.
- I don't know the key to success but the key to failure is trying to please everybody. - Bill Cosby
- When you strive for greatness chaos is guaranteed to show up.
- If a clutter filled desk is the sign of a cluttered mind, then what is an empty desk a sign of? - Albert Einstein
- Personal energy mismanagement is a silent thief of productivity.
- When you clear the path to success, that's when you consistently get there.
- The road to success is always under construction.
- Only those willing to go too far are able to find out how far one can go. - TS Eliot
- A life worth living can be measured in many ways, but the way that stands above the rest is a life with no regrets.
- Half-filled dreams and unfilled hopes were the number 1 regrets of dying people.
- Success is an inside job. Put yourself together, and your world falls into place.
- If you try to do everything, you could end up with nothing. If you try to do just One Thing, you could end up with everything you ever wanted.