

PICK ONE THING

We all know from our high school science class that there exist the physical laws of the universe. They apply to us, even if we are uncertain as to how they work. For example, we are each grounded to this earth by the law of gravity, even when we don't know what it is.

Perhaps Galileo's greatest contribution to physics was his formulation of the concept of inertia: an object in a state of motion possesses an "inertia" that causes it to remain in that state of motion unless an external force acts on it. The converse is true as well. In other words, without outside intervention, an object at rest stays at rest. So, in any situation when we must regain our sense of efficacy, we must first overcome our tendency towards inertia. Translated, this means that action begets action. Doing something positive allows us to begin moving forward, to progress, even if it is at a snail's pace.

The same is true when in our personal lives, we are totally incapacitated by logistical demands. There is overwhelming, unending stuff requiring constant maintenance. We are repeatedly faced with the daunting task of regaining our mental focus and emotional balance. To be productive, we sorely need an ability to focus, and to sustain a sense of efficacy. But how?

The key is to realize that, whether you've been aware of them or not, a hundred little decisions have led you into this awful place. It is also true that the act of making just one new decision can begin to lead you out. Consider Theodore Roosevelt's advice. Begin to "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."

Each of us must honestly evaluate our own anxiety and our own inertia. It's a very personal thing. We must each evaluate ourselves. We must each assess what is at the root of these feelings. We must factor in our individual personality types, then formulate and carry out a plan of action that will speak to these preferences. Take stock in yourself. Then take a physical action. In contrast to turmoil and chaos, taking meaningful action contributes to feelings of efficacy and power.

Of the many techniques I've developed, this is one of my favorites: Begin where you are, pick just one thing you would most like to change, and start there. You see, even though everything seems to need fixing, you don't have to change everything to make it all different. Choose one thing to do differently, do it, then sit back and watch for awhile, to see how it affects the rest of your life. When countless issues attack you at once, it's amazing how well changing just one thing works!

"Wow!" you say, "You mean to tell me that if I do just one thing differently, I can change my crummy circumstances and have a happier life?" Yes, I do. Stop and think for a minute. Do you already know what that one thing could be?