

# *The Power of One Thing*

## Discussion Guide

### Introduction

1. Describe a goal you have set more than once without reaching it. What do you think makes it so difficult to achieve?
2. What goal would be most meaningful for you to reach right now? What do you think about Randy's claim that you can get there one step at a time?

### Chapter 1: Do One Small Thing—Intentionally

1. Describe a time in your life when you were intentional about meeting some goal. Contrast that with a time when you were merely well-intentioned. How did each situation turn out?
2. Think back over the past month. Which of the following factors would you say got in the way most often when you were trying to accomplish something—whether a daily task, like finishing the dishes, or a major goal, like finding a new job: distractions, interruptions, work or home demands, procrastination, laziness, discouragement, disorganization?
3. Explain why you agree or disagree with the following statement, found on page 5: “Following through on your intentions is often manageable only when you focus on the next one thing you need to do to bring about change.”
4. Consider a major achievement (or goal) in your life. What would you say are the six to twelve “one things” that got you (or will get you) to your goal?

### Chapter 2: “But I’ve Tried to Change Before. . . .”

1. Describe a regret you have because someone else was more intentional about something important to you than you were.

2. Which “enemy of change” (discouragement, anxiety, disruptions, or waiting) affects you most?

3. Are you living in survival or significance mode today? If survival, what do you think it would take to move you to significance mode? If significance, what enables you to stay there?

### **Chapter 3: Ready . . . Set . . . Know!**

1. Consider your personality, work or learning style, problem-solving preferences, etc. What do they reveal about what works best for you when you are trying to meet a goal?

2. Randy talks about the rock-laying project when he was very intentional, but unfortunately he was unintentionally wrong. Can you think of a similar incident in your own life that didn’t work out because you failed to see your blind spots?

3. What does the state of the important relationships in your life tell you about what you may need to change?

### **Chapter 4: Where Do You Want to Grow First?**

1. Using a real-life situation, complete the equation *Information + Insight + Action = Intentional Living*. For example:

*Information:* At your annual review your boss tells you that although you’re a good worker, she is considering promoting a coworker instead of you because you arrive late to work at least a few times each month.

*Insight:* You’ve been staying up so late surfing the Internet that you often don’t hear your alarm in the morning.

*Action:* You begin turning off the computer as soon as you flip on the evening news at 10 p.m.

Now it’s your turn. If you’ve already identified your One Thing, use that situation. If not, create a hypothetical one to gain practice at what it means to live intentionally.

*Information:*

*Insight:*

*Action:*

2. Using the situation you described above, write down the larger problem and goal. In the case of the tardy worker:

*The Problem:* You're in danger of missing out on the promotion you've been working for because your tardiness has diminished your boss's confidence in you.

*The Goal:* To demonstrate in concrete ways to your boss that you are trustworthy and responsible.

Now it's your turn:

*The Problem:*

*The Goal:*

3. Now create a list of all the One Things you'll need to do to get to your goal. Using the work situation above as an example, you might decide to:

- a. Leave for work at least 10 minutes earlier every morning.
- b. Enroll in the computer class at the community college that your boss recommended.
- c. Make a point of checking in with your boss on your schedule weekly, making sure to let her know if you're available for additional projects.
- d. Clean off your desk before leaving Friday afternoon.

Now it's your turn:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

## **Chapter 5: The Power of One Thing to Change Your Thinking**

1. Describe a recent problem you faced. Would you say you focused more on the problem or on possible solutions? What was the result?
2. What lies do you (or have you) told yourself? How could you counteract them in the future?

3. What do you think of Randy's suggestion to create a thinking list and spend time with it every day?
4. If you realize that your negative thinking is the source of many of your problems, what one thing might you begin doing today to change it?

## **Chapter 6: The Power of One Thing to Change Your Attitude**

1. In what ways do you see your thinking affecting your attitude?
2. After reading this chapter, would you say you need an attitude adjustment? If yes, in what way?
3. Describe a time when the equation *Expectations – Reality = Disappointment* applied to a situation you were in. How might being aware of this connection help you in a similar situation in the future?
4. If your negative attitude is depressing you and turning off others, what one thing might you begin doing today to become a more positive person?

## **Chapter 7: The Power of One Thing to Change Your Emotions**

1. Have you ever been impacted by runaway emotions, whether your own or someone else's? Explain.
2. Consider the three responses to emotion described on pages 68–70. Think of a recent major event in your life. How did your emotions affect your response?
3. Based on Daniel Goleman's definition of emotional intelligence (pp. 75–77), how would you rate yourself? Where do you excel? Where do you see the most room for improvement?

4. If you recognize that your feelings are at the root of most of your conflicts, what one thing might you begin doing today to keep them from running your life?

## **Chapter 8: The Power of One Thing to Change Your Words**

1. Are your words more likely to heal or to hurt? How does this affect those closest to you?
2. Describe a time when someone else's words had a dramatic effect on the course of your life.
3. Which would you say you need to do more: eliminate or add certain phrases to your communication? (See page 91 for examples.)
4. If you realize that your words are tearing down the people closest to you, what one thing might you begin doing today to speak words that will build them up?

## **Chapter 9: The Power of One Thing to Change How You Use Your Time**

1. In what ways, if any, would you say the urgent tends to crowd out any time for the important things in your life?
2. On pages 97–99, the author describes seven time wasters. Which are problems for you? Explain.
3. If you had three hours to “invest” this week, where would you spend it?
4. If you feel that time is slipping away from you, what one thing might you begin doing this week to use it more wisely?

## **Chapter 10: The Power of One Thing to Change How You Pick Friends**

1. Have you been intentional about the kinds of friends you've made? Explain.
2. Review the traits of healthy and unhealthy friendships on page 107. Now think of your closet friendship. Which list better describes that relationship?
3. If you have experienced a rift in a friendship that is especially meaningful to you, what one thing might you begin doing today to begin repairing that relationship?

## **Chapter 11: The Power of One Thing to Unclutter Your Life**

1. Would you say the clutter in your life is mostly visible or invisible? Explain.
2. Explain which form of clutter causes the most problems for you: physical, mental, emotional, relational, or schedule.
3. If you have trouble moving forward because of the clutter in your life, what one thing can you begin doing today to begin clearing it from your home, mind, relationships, or schedule?

## **Chapter 12: The Power of One Thing to Change the Questions You Ask**

1. How would you describe good questions? What are their characteristics and results?
2. Do you agree that asking "why?" can be dangerous? Explain.
3. When it comes to relating to others, would you say you're better at asking good questions or listening to answers? What is one thing you could begin doing today to develop the weaker skill?

## **Chapter 13: The Power of One Thing to Change How You Make Decisions**

1. What one decision do you need to make now to change your life for the better in the future?
2. What options are you considering as you ponder this decision? Look at the problem from another angle and see if you can come up with one or more additional options. For instance, if you don't get along with your boss, you may be trying to decide whether to grin and bear it or find another job. Are other options—such as transferring to another department or sitting down with him to try to work out your differences—available to you?
3. If you have trouble acting on decisions, consider the five steps to take when you've made a decision (page 154). Where in this process do you tend to get stuck?
4. If your inability to make a decision is holding you back, what one thing could you begin doing today to feel more confident in your decision making?

## **Chapter 14: A Dream Worth Pursuing**

1. When you have a dream, are you more likely to spend time daydreaming and wishing it would come true or to begin acting on it, one small thing at a time?
2. When it comes to making decisions, are you more like Abraham or Lot? Explain.
3. Perhaps you are more interested in doing one small thing to achieve a dream rather than to solve a problem. If so, what one thing could you begin doing today to begin working toward that dream?

### **After you've finished the book . . .**

Turn to page 171 (immediately after the endnotes) and write down your problem, goal, and commitment to change. If possible, find a trustworthy person who is willing to check in with

you at least every two weeks to help you evaluate your progress. May God be with you as you begin doing the one thing that will lead you to a better life!