

Weekly tips to help you and your colleagues become more effective and respected leaders.

Finding Your "One Thing"

In the movie *City Slickers*, a group of friends take a “vacation” at a dude ranch. Curley, played by Jack Palance, is a crusty yet wise old cowboy who shares the following with Mitch, played by Billy Crystal:

<i>Curley:</i>	Do you know what the secret of life is?
<i>Mitch:</i>	No, what?
<i>Curley:</i>	This. (Holds up his index finger.)
<i>Mitch:</i>	Your finger?
<i>Curley:</i>	One thing. Just one thing. You stick to that and everything else don't mean [anything].
<i>Mitch:</i>	That's great, but what's the one thing?
<i>Curley:</i>	That's what you've got to figure out!

Great scene ... great advice. Leaders have to figure out the One Thing that defines a meaningful purpose for their teams. The One Thing should answer the question Why are we here? You may think that finding that focus isn't critical; but in fact, it's essential to your success. **The most important thing in business (and life) is deciding what is most important.**

Your team's One Thing might be: producing defect-free materials; providing the fastest service available; developing leading-edge products; creating relationships that customers cannot walk away from; or meeting the technology needs of other departments. These are just examples – your One Thing has to be your One Thing. And it should guide all of your decisions and actions.

Even after you find your One Thing, sticking to it can be a challenge while you put out fires and explore new opportunities. Don't be tempted to think, as some do, that you can keep piling on initiatives and still maintain your team's focus. You may find yourself in the middle of the “Ship is Adrift” Syndrome. Instead, consider automating, streamlining or outsourcing areas that are not core to your team's operation.

A laser-sharp focus does not happen overnight. It takes time and effort to refine, reinforce, and communi-cate your One Thing. But you need to start now. Blurred focus creates confusion – resulting in diffused employee efforts. Stay focused! Remember Curley!

Today's solution is from [Sticking To It: The Art of Adherence](#)

By Lee J. Colan

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"People spend their lives in the service of their passions instead of employing their passions in the service of their lives." Sir Richard Steele