

One Thing At A Time



JOE FERGUSON, PhD

PhD Clinical Psychology, Fielding University
MBA, Wharton School of Business

When multiple growth opportunities present themselves simultaneously it is wise to do as close to one thing at a time as possible until the onslaught has passed. It is well known that *when it rains it pours*, *trouble never comes alone*, and that *a perfect storm can always hit the fan*. This is not the tragic hand of fate, it is a statistical inevitability that is sometimes abetted by a morbid turn of mood. The statistical part is obvious. When our mood turns sour at some psychological tipping point, then our selective attention suddenly recognizes only catastrophes, potential catastrophes, and the general fear of impending catastrophe. You know the feeling.

This is when some people panic even though panic is known to be unhelpful. Panic is a sort of multiprocessing overload and it calls for corrective measures as soon as it is suspected or detected. Everyone knows that the first thing to do with a hysterical person is to calm them down before dealing with any of the twelve emergencies that they see arrayed before them. Then you deal with those things calmly and systematically, one impending catastrophe at a time. This is obvious when you are dealing with someone else who is wrapped around multiple axles, but it is harder to bear in mind when it is you and when the overload is marginal; especially if you are accustomed to thinking of yourself as an effective multiprocessing executive type. In fact, serial myopia is an executive technique that is especially important in chaotic or crisis situations with the potential for overload.

It is not intuitive that the most effective thing to do first in overwhelming circumstances is nothing, but if you think of it as a pause for breath and orientation then it sounds much more responsible. At any rate each of us has a different tipping point at which our multiprocessor is throwing off more heat than light, and when we reach it we need to shift into crisis management mode, which usually involves a system reset and a period of single-threaded operations. Trust me. Call me.

Relief, Recovery, Resolution

332 Forest Avenue, Suite #17, Laguna Beach, CA 92651
(949) 235-2615 ~ DrJoe@Fergi.com ~ www.Fergi.com