

How to do Everything

by

Cliff Williamson

*Sound a little ambitious? You are right.
But let this be for the ambitious ones.*

Steven Hawking, one of the most brilliant minds ever, is working on a big project. If his crippling disease doesn't kill him first, he may succeed. He is searching for a unified theory of everything. That is a pretty large concept, and difficult for most of us mortals to get our arms around. Essentially he is looking for a theory that will mathematically explain the creation of the universe and all the workings within it. The theory of relativity, to give you an idea, is just a small part of the whole package.

To look at Steven Hawking, one would quite understandably look away and avoid staring at this wheelchair-bound, little figure which appears to suffer with every breath. But once you learn of his intellectual and scientific achievements, you will quickly see that this guy has guts. And he thinks big. Real big.

Then take guys like Leonardo Da Vinci. He was a painter, sculptor, scientist, biologist, inventor, and writer. I am sure I am leaving out half the list. This guy was brilliant in everything he touched. How can we live up to that standard?

I do not claim to be brilliant, but I do claim the right to model my life after brilliant people. Why mess around? If we know of someone who does something right, it is foolish not to strive to imitate that person. There is no humiliation in imitation. It is a good thing.

Let's take codes of ethical behavior. Christian or non-Christian, we can model our behavior towards our fellow man on the life of Jesus Christ. For determination and the will to win in adversity, we have Winston Churchill as an example. For resisting the forces of repression, we have Martin Luther King and Harry Wong of China. For overcoming serious physical handicaps and becoming productive and inspirational human beings, we have the aforementioned Mr. Hawking plus Helen Keller. Apologies to cultures and countries not included in my examples - I am certain each culture and country has its role models, and all are deserving our praise and recognition.

And what about you and me? Humble movers? Can we aspire to greatness? To do everything? To learn everything? To invent? To create? To discover? To construct? How can we possibly succeed in achieving ambitious goals?

Maybe we cannot succeed in everything, but I can tell you this: if we try, we may fail. If we don't try, we most certainly WILL fail. If we try many things we may fail in some, but succeed in others. That, ladies and gentlemen, was a mildly disguised pitch to encourage you to try.

Genetic material for Leonardo - to my knowledge - is not available. We cannot clone him or splice his DNA into our own to make a super-version of ourselves. *What can we do* to achieve more in life, both professional and personal? Let's look at some practical ideas and suggestions on how to achieve - if not everything - at least *more*. Here are some ideas to consider, for those of you **who aspire to do everything**.

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- **Build energy through exercise:** There is no mystery here. Anyone who exercises regularly will tell you that regular physical exercise (preferably a combination of aerobic and weight-bearing) gives you more energy, staying power, and mental as well as physical stamina.
- **Stay healthy:** Good lifestyle habits mean less interruption in the pursuit of your goals. Interruptions not only cause you to lose productive time but also break your rhythm and inertia. Good health is part genetic, but much more self-discipline and smart living.
- **Get organized:** Everyone has the same number of hours in a day, so why is it that some people get so much more done than others? The answer is most assuredly that the big producers are more organized with their time. They look for ways to multi-task, to seek shortcuts, and simpler ways to achieve tasks. They avoid time-wasting habits like smoking, procrastinating, and television. They value their own time and resist efforts by others to distract them from their goals.
- **Plan:** Getting organized includes planning. Planning is a way of anticipating problems and avoiding them before they occur. Planning signifies maximizing the utilization of resources.
- **Work hard:** No substitute here. One can abuse oneself and lose efficiency due to overwork, but generally speaking, more work means greater achievement. Be careful not to confuse working hard with long hours. They are related but not identical.
- **Sleep less:** Wake up a little earlier and get a jump on the day. Find and insist upon conditions that enable you to sleep well and rest well. Just sleep a little less.
- **Buy time:** Arrange your time so you can do more of what you do best. Find and hire others to do what is easy for them to do as well or better than you. Invest a little of your profits into hiring assistance so you are free to work at top efficiency.
- **Choose goals carefully:** Goal setting should be considered one of the most important activities you do in your life. False starts and errors in your choice of goals are costly in terms of personal achievement. Invest more time in reflecting carefully and investigating your personal and professional goals to avoid making the wrong choice.
- **Surround yourself with supportive people:** Careful here. Do not look for people who will agree with you no matter what. Find employees and friends who will question you constructively, but once you make a decision, they will accept it and do whatever is in their power (physically and psychologically) to assist you in realizing that goal.
- **Reward yourself:** Put most simply, work hard - play hard. We all respond better to encouragement and positive reinforcement. We need to find ways to celebrate our victories, acknowledge our achievements, and reward our hard work. Set rewards at the same time you set goals so that you have more than just a desire for achievement as your motivation. Human beings need encouragement. Don't deprive yourself of it.
- **Be courageous:** To be courageous, you must be an exception. Few people are exceptional (by definition if for no other reason), but all people have the right and the capacity to be exceptional. Judge your achievements by the standard you set for yourself, not by the standard set by and for the masses.
- **Take calculated risks:** Avoiding risk altogether means you will live a very average life. Cover the basics (It makes no sense to take risks with your health, for example)

but stretch out more on the other things. Striving for greatness requires risking failure. But failure is not always final. Failure is final only when you decide to give up.

- **Think:** Thinking is underrated. Don't let thinking become an unconscious act. When allowed to become unconscious, thinking becomes reactive rather than pro-active. Think about thinking. How do you think best? Under what conditions and in what situations? Dedicate yourself to clear thinking. Who doubts that we are capable of thinking more and better than we currently do? Try to squeeze a little more out of the computer you carry under your hat. The capacity is there if you can find how to put it to work.
- **Keep records of your thoughts, achievements, and activities:** Many good ideas get away. Don't let them. Keep notes and records. An idea that seems like a dead-end today could become an exciting beginning tomorrow.
- **Study the lives of great people:** Don't feel you are plagiarizing when you quote or imitate a great person. The human race needs to learn from and build upon the achievements of the great figures of history. Look for a little Leonardo next time you look in the mirror. You might find him... in yourself.

Did that make you tired? I hope not. I hope it gives you new energy in your mission to do everything ... or at least everything you want to do ...in your life.

Cliff Williamson is the managing director of Transpack Argentina in Buenos Aires. He admits that he has not yet been able to do everything, but is still trying. He will, of course, let you know when he is successful.