



**LCBS-2023-07-12-ABoxOfRocks.pdf**

### **Lessons from a Box of Rocks**

**It is crucial in life to work with a plan. Some folks think they can just start each day and things will just work out. Your day will come and go, but without a clear plan of action, you will not accomplish as much as you could with an organized plan.**

**In college, I had a great professor who encouraged his students to think outside of the box. He constantly used unconventional methods to teach. One day he came to class with a few boxes of rocks. He said today we are going to use this large box and these rocks to teach some lessons.**

**He poured the boxes of rocks out on his desk and set one large box on top of the desk. He asked us what we should put in the box first. The little rocks or the big ones? Several students said the small ones, but the majority said to go with the big rocks first. He put those in first and then proceeded to put in the next largest rocks.**

**The box was almost full. He asked, "Is the box full yet?" Some agreed, and some disagreed. "What should go in next?" he asked. We had 2 more sizes of rocks, some gravel, and some dirt on the desk.**

**Since the larger ones had been the right answer before, we went with the larger ones. He then filled in the smallest rocks and shook it. Is it full? We all agreed it was full now. He then proved us wrong by adding the gravel and shaking the box. Is it full yet? We said yes, it is full. He shook the box and then poured in the sand. All 5 boxes of rocks, gravel, and sand fit in that one big box. He then asked, "What did we learn from this?"**

**One forward-thinking student volunteered "No matter how busy your schedule is, you can always squeeze in a few more things." He said "No. That is not the lesson." He asked the question again "What did we learn from this?" Many guesses were offered, but no one had the right answer.**

He said what this box of rocks teaches you is that you must put the largest things in life first. In life, the important large things have to take precedence over the smaller stuff, or you will not have the room and time to do all the things you want to accomplish.

Think about that. If you put in the dirt first, then all the room around the rocks would not have been filled in, and most likely all of the rocks would not have fit. As you shake a box of rocks, the big ones come to the top and the little ones go to the bottom.

Another lesson he pointed out is how no matter where you are in life, life is shaking and if you are a big 'rock' at the bottom, life will eventually force you to the top if you keep on and don't quit trying. And if you are a little rock sitting on the top, the shaking will send you back to your correct position at the bottom. We need to grow and keep on keeping on to move to the top. Life has a way of moving us to our level. This validates the old Peter Principle about how we all fall back down to our level of incompetence.

**The Peter Principle is an observation that the tendency in most organizational hierarchies, such as that of a corporation, is for every employee to rise in the hierarchy through promotion until they reach a level of respective incompetence.**

**It is amazing how we can learn from something as simple as box of rocks.**

This past week, I read a book called Rich Habits, Poor Habits by Michael Yardney. In the book he told about a plan he picked up to deal with issues. I also read this same plan from a Marine Sergeant in regards to battlefield preparation. Both men said to prepare the right battle plan, you need to do 3 simple things.

1. THINK
2. EVALUATE
3. RESPOND

It is crucial to take the time to think. We need to understand the situation whether dealing with a battle zone or some trial of life. By thinking we can now evaluate the situation and determine our best course of action.

After giving yourself time to think and evaluate, you then respond with action. Reaction is not the same as responding and rarely the appropriate action. We need to not get in a hurry but think things out and take adequate time to evaluate. A response is good most of the time, but reactions can cause us more trouble than they correct.

In life, to be effective, we have to be intentional with our actions. It is so easy to react to a situation without thinking and evaluating. Quick reactions are never good. Think things out and then RESPOND. I am sure you remember times when your mouth was engaged before getting the brain in gear. It is easier to take the quicker method of ready, fire, and then aim. This is never good and the results are mostly bad.

**Before considering opening fire (even about life's situations), we need to always follow a logical plan of action. Get ready, aim, and then fire.**

**To be successful, we need to control our tongues and words. So when you are faced with any situation, remember the 3 methods Michael Yardney uses:**

- 1. Think**
- 2. Evaluate**
- 3. Respond**

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