

# Stop Wrestling Alligators

*By Will Turner*

Do you spend your days wrestling alligators? Or are you a swamp drainer? Unfortunately, most of us are alligator wrestlers. And while the alligators may change from day to day, the results are the same.

Our days get out of hand. Our time is lost to battles that consume us. We become reactionary.

There's only one way to get rid of the alligators. But it requires us to change. And change is hard. But trust me, fighting alligators every day is even harder.

To break out of our trap, we have to replace our ineffective ways with more productive ones. It starts with breaking up our routines. We're all creatures of habits. In fact the research indicates that as much as 88% of our day is spent on automatic pilot. In other words, we do the same things and often deal with the same situations in the same predictable ways...even when our predictable ways don't yield the best results.

Time out!!! What's wrong with this picture? We're going crazy and we're stuck in a pattern of reacting and doing the same things over and over again. Remember the definition of "insanity" – it's doing the same thing over and over but expecting different results.

The only way to change an unproductive habit is to replace it with a more effective one. It sounds simple in theory. In practice, our habits are hard to break because they keep us in our comfort zone. It's what we know. It's easy.

In fact, we usually have to get to the point where we can't take it any more to be willing to change. Until then, we plod along bemoaning the alligators nipping at our feet or chomping on our legs.

To change habits, we have to be aware and understand that there is another way. Once we have that awareness, we have to learn better ways of doing what we're doing. This often takes help or guidance from others. Or it takes critical thought on our part.

In other words, we're so busy fighting alligators that we don't realize that there is a better way. We think that we're stuck in the alligator fighter career track. Unless someone comes along and says, "Hey, did you know you could stop fighting alligators every day if you learned how to drain this swamp you're living in?"

"You can drain the swamp?" you reply incredulously. Who knew?

The same realization may come to us through thoughtful reflection and brainstorming. “How could we change things around here so we’re not always reacting to alligators?” In this process, we would want to analyze the alligators you fight. Where do they come from? Are they the same? What’s their source? What could be done differently around here to eliminate or reduce the number of alligators? Are there systems or processes that can be put in place? What are my best options?

With some focused time, we can start to see the bigger picture and devise better solutions or get help from others. We can actually change ineffective habits. Do it now, before that big gator starts licking his chops.

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