



UP
front



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With age comes acceptance. As I've gotten older, I've become progressively less flappable. Even as a young man, I approached potential setbacks with "We'll figure it out." It's a new year, which brings new challenges, and two are converging at once to make this an extra-"special" week.

First, school is back for spring semester. People ask me what I do, and I don't have a ready or simple answer. But one of the responsibilities to which I am most rigidly beholden is teaching a class at the Parker College of Business at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro each Wednesday from 2 to 4:45 p.m. (often, without giving the kids a break in the middle of the 3-ish-hour block). Preparation requires about three hours for each one in the classroom. That's nine hours on Tuesdays and Wednesday mornings if I want to do and excellent job, make a difference in the students' lives, and give them (or whomever is paying) their money's worth... and I do. Coincidentally, every other Tuesday morning demands this column and my food feature get written so we can print the magazine. The rest of my work has less-precise rhythms, but my Strategic Management seminar and The Skinnie wait for no man (or woman), though Philip, our creative director is – literally – waiting for me right now.

Today is tricky, since we opened our second Cutters Point Coffee shop in Claxton yesterday (Monday, January 15) at 6:30 a.m. sharp. I'd love to be at the coffee shop right now with our new team as I was yesterday, working through service and facilities kinks, but I must write this and then re-read three chapters and three case that I have studied several times before, albeit not recently enough to remember authoritatively, which, for a teacher, is basic par.

The most controllable thing, I tell my students, is effort. "If you want success – however you define it – you significantly influence its likelihood. There is one thing that everyone has in his or her power to do: And it's to

outwork 100 percent of everybody else. You control the effort; you don't perfectly control the results."

I remind myself of this lofty platitude countless times each day when I feel lazy or disinclined to pursue the next necessary thing. Like now. What comes after putting the last period at the end of the last sentence on this page? I'm hosting an internal debate between the demands of my homework for tomorrow's class, the prudence of a pop-in at my new coffee shop, and the appeal of a long walk along the dirt road that runs past my barn. Mindful of my professorial advice: Homework, then shop, then a shorter-than-I'd-like stroll beneath fading light is the hierarchy I know to be right.

Back to the question of what I do. A bunch of things. Which makes life interesting. But it complicates keeping score. I probably don't do any of the many things as well as I could. I tell my students effectively measuring outcomes is crucial when you evaluate an enterprise. It's equally important to ensure you're measuring the right things, rather than the things that are simply the easiest or most convenient to measure. So, if constant-change-and-challenge and is the metric, I've designed the right system for me. Even if it's awkward for a moment every time someone asks me, "What do you do?"

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