

By Bill Guertin

*The 800-Pound Gorilla*

## **“TREES ARE 90% AIR...” OR HOW TO STOP PROBLEMS FROM STOPPING YOU**

I knew I should have hit the ball more to the right.

The tee shot felt good, but then the wind caught it. Slightly at first, then a little more as it began its downward flight. Sure enough, the ball landed within the group of trees off to the left of the fairway.

As I got into the cart with Gary, my good friend and golfing partner, we talked about trees and what a nuisance they can be. Should I chip around them and burn a stroke to get a better shot at the green on the next swing, or go for the green through the trees with the hope of punching out cleanly on the other side?

“Trees are 90% air,” he said with a grin. “If you pick a spot through the trees, take dead aim, and follow through with your shot, most times you’ll get through OK.”

How true it is in business too.

We’re all faced with “trees”-- difficult business challenges-- every day. You need to fire someone. A key client isn’t paying you on time. A new, aggressive competitor is coming to town. What to do?

We can be frozen in our fear of the situation and its ramifications. Many times, however, we do far more damage by doing nothing than by acting on any of the choices we had.

You need to fire someone, but there’s no one else to take her place and you don’t have the time to conduct a search, so you give her one more chance. You have a collection problem with a key client, but you don’t want to upset them by asking for the money, so you let it slide for a little bit longer. You learn that an aggressive competitor is coming to town, and you know it will mean changes in your organization, but you put off addressing the issue until you know they’re actually coming.

Problems don’t go away. Unfortunately, the mere presence of problems can stop even the best people in their tracks from time to time.

When you’re confronted with a difficult situation, ask yourself a basic question: ***What am I really afraid of?***

Most fear only exists in our mind. Small issues can get blown out of proportion, and we can create oversized mental pictures that are ridiculous when we compare them to the facts.

You can re-word the question in several ways. ***What do I fear most? What do I fear in the future? What do I fear right now? What deeper problems can I avoid by taking action sooner rather than later?***

Reflective thinking over good, sound questions like these can give you clarity, and allow you to focus on the real issues.

We all experience fear at one time or another. The only true way to overcome fear is to confront it. How you confront it is what determines whether or not you will be successful. Courage to confront your fear is crucial to success. And, like success itself, you build this courage one step at a time, through small incremental changes that reach to the core of your belief system.

No great castles or monuments were built until someone placed one block of stone on top of another.

Back on the course, I made my decision. I selected a 7-iron, took dead aim at the green through the least branch-laden path I could find and over the tallest tree, and swung with confidence. The ball sailed through the branches, over the tree, and landed squarely on the green.

“90% air,” I said, smiling.

What big issues are you putting off right now? What actions need to be taken now instead of next week or next month? What are the ramifications of waiting? And what good things could happen if you acted swiftly, decisively, and completely?

Take action. Don't wait. Put your fears aside, take dead aim, and do the thing that must be done.

And when this article helps you get beyond whatever “it” is, send me an e-mail and let me know. Send it to [Bill@The800PoundGorilla.com](mailto:Bill@The800PoundGorilla.com), and let's celebrate your victory.

*Bill Guertin, Chief Enthusiasm Officer of The 800-Pound Gorilla, works with companies of all sizes to improve their service skills, image and profitability. He can be reached at [Bill@The800PoundGorilla.com](mailto:Bill@The800PoundGorilla.com).*