

Remember The Frog¹

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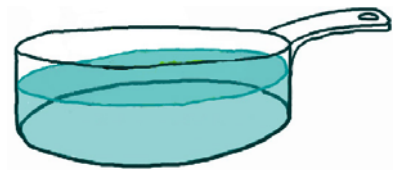


I was sitting at my desk the other day, thinking about the dramatic changes that have taken place in the economy—not just our economy, but also the whole world economy. Changes that have impacted the lives of people all over the world. Surely there's a lesson to be learned from what has happened.

It reminded me of an old parable that's been around since the 19th century, *The Parable Of The Boiled Frog*. It's a profound little story that we should all keep in mind, during *both* good and bad times.

It goes like this.

There once was a cook who decided to enjoy a little boiled frog for dinner (not *my* first choice). He took a pan, filled it with water, set it on the stove, and turned on the gas. He figured he would let it come to a boil while he went out to the back of his rural property to find himself a little frog.



After a few minutes searching around the stream at the end of his property, he found a little frog. Pleased, he came back to his kitchen and patiently waited for the water to come to a boil.



Finally, the water boiled and the cook took the frog and plopped him into the boiling water.

What do you think happened?

Well, the poor little frog very quickly tried to jump out of the pot of boiling water! After all, he doesn't want to boil to death!

¹ From: <http://arniedahlke.com/timelytips.htm> —Please take a moment to look at Arnie's site: www.arniedahlke.com

The cook managed to capture the escaping frog and decided to try a different strategy.

He emptied the pan of boiling water and cooled it off until it reached room temperature. He placed the frog in the pot. The frog happily swam around.

He then turned on the heat very low and over a period of several minutes allowed the water to *slowly* come to a boil. And he watched the frog.

As the temperature gradually increased, he saw the frog get groggy, then slowly get sleepy. The warmer the water got, the sleepier the frog got.

Finally, even though there was nothing stopping the frog from trying to scramble out of the water, the frog just sat there as the water came to a boil.



What happened here?

In the first case, when the cook put the frog into the boiling water, the frog immediately tried to scramble out. But, in the second case, when the cook gradually warmed the water with the frog already in it, the frog did nothing. Why the difference between the two methods?

Here's why. A frog's internal survival mechanism is geared toward sudden change. Placing him in boiling water is certainly a sudden change. When the cook put that poor little frog into the pan of boiling water, you bet the frog quickly tried to get out!

But, that's not the situation in the second instance. When the cook slowly increased the temperature of the water, the poor little frog didn't even notice the change. He happily, and then groggily and then, sleepily, just sat there in the water and did nothing, even when the water came to a boil.

There's an important message in this little parable of the boiled frog:

CHANGE IS INEVITABLE IN OUR LIVES

The problem is that many people in organizations today, like the frog, are so accustomed to what they've always been doing, that they hardly even notice the change taking place. Or, if they *do* notice, they minimize it to keep themselves feeling comfortable. So, like the boiled frog, they just complacently go about their usual business, even though the changes scream at them to do something different, to change course before it's too late.

Take this little story to heart. As you go about your daily business, keep the little frog in mind. Ask yourself, "What can I change to make everything work more effectively? Are there changes I can make now to build a better long-term future?"



REMEMBER THE FROG!