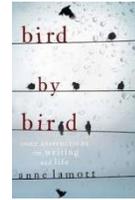


Bird by Bird

Many of you may be like me in collecting “stuff”. My garage, my closet, my office all at times get overwhelmed with stuff. As I accumulate new information, begin new projects, or start and restart writing various pieces, and articles, I often gaze around the room and think, “one of these days I’m going to clean this place up.” One of the things that I collect is books. I have hundreds of books. Maybe thousands, but I’m not sure.



Recently as I sat down to write, I decided that maybe before I wrote, I should clean up the office or at least my desk. The first thing I moved, in an attempt to tidy up was a book by Anne Lamott titled Bird by Bird. It’s book on writing that years ago I found very helpful. In the book, the author tells a story of



young boy who is tasked with writing a paper about all the different types of birds. Feeling overwhelmed by the job at hand, the boy’s father gives him the advice that got him through the project. Son, he says, just do it bird by bird.



I remembered that this had been my mantra of getting through many projects and as I looked around my messy office, I just kept repeating, “bird by bird”

In a different but somewhat parallel situation, in a conversation with a gym owner I heard a complaint of not having enough gym space. She said that she had children on a waiting list, but the gym was just too crowded now. She proclaimed, “I need a bigger gym”. I agreed that she could use more space, but as I looked around the gym I couldn’t help but think that the gym could use a

good once over cleaning. At that suggestion, the owner came right back at me with yea, and how am I ever going to get around to all that cleaning. I simply suggested, bird by bird.

This comment always gets me funny looks, but it is very simplistic and logical. Maybe it would make more sense if I said mat by mat, but what fun would that be. By picking up stray mats, reorganizing random training apparatus, cleaning the pit, and realigning your equipment, you might just find hidden under one of those unused mats some additional space for another gymnast.



Cleaning and organizing the gym is a habit that is worth building. Not only will you make room for more gymnasts, but the new appearance of the gym will attract new customers. Your gym might already be extremely organized and regularly cleaned and if it is, congrats. We need to encourage all gym owners to make sure they are providing a clean healthy atmosphere. If you are already good, look for ways to get better. What’s



your schedule for cleaning your pit, removing old and shedding foam, rotating mats around your gym (remind me, that’s another article), vacuuming the carpet, scrubbing the floors. If you put it all on a schedule, you can make it a habit.



That’s it. A short and sweet message. Now I must run to help my granddaughter Millie clean her room. She asked me how we are ever going to clean up this mess and I went to my go to phrase, “Bird by bird”. She just gave the normal eyeroll reserved for her grandfather with weird ideas. Here’s hoping your spring cleaning goes well

Steve

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