

If you had to make one change, what would it be?

## The One Thing

### THE STORY:

In the 90s movie **City Slickers** Jack Palance plays Curly, the crustiest cigarette-hanging-out-of-the-corner-of-his-mouth cowboy you have ever seen; Billy Crystal plays Mitch, a “city slicker” in midlife crisis hoping to rediscover himself on a two-week cattle drive. As they ride side-by-side on horses Curly asks, “Do you know what the secret of life is?” Mitch responds by asking, “No, what?” Curly holds up his glove-covered hand with his index finger pointing up and says, “This.” Mitch responds sarcastically, “Your finger?” With his finger still pointing up Curly responds, “One thing, just one thing. You stick to that and everything else don’t mean s!&t.” Mitch replies, “That’s great, but what is the one thing?” Curly responds, “That’s what you’ve got to figure out.”

### INSIGHT:

The one thing in state government - if you want to transform it - is to begin by **establishing measures, specifically measures that report outcomes/results**. The measures should answer the question, “How well are we doing?” Whether you are working on reducing traffic fatalities, helping teens at risk of suicide, reducing opioid overdose deaths, issuing drivers’ licenses, or creating budget reports, is what you are doing working for the people you serve?

**Measures, Curly, are the one thing when it comes to transforming government.**

**Measures give us a direct view into our work helping us understand if what we are doing is having the effect we desire.**



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