

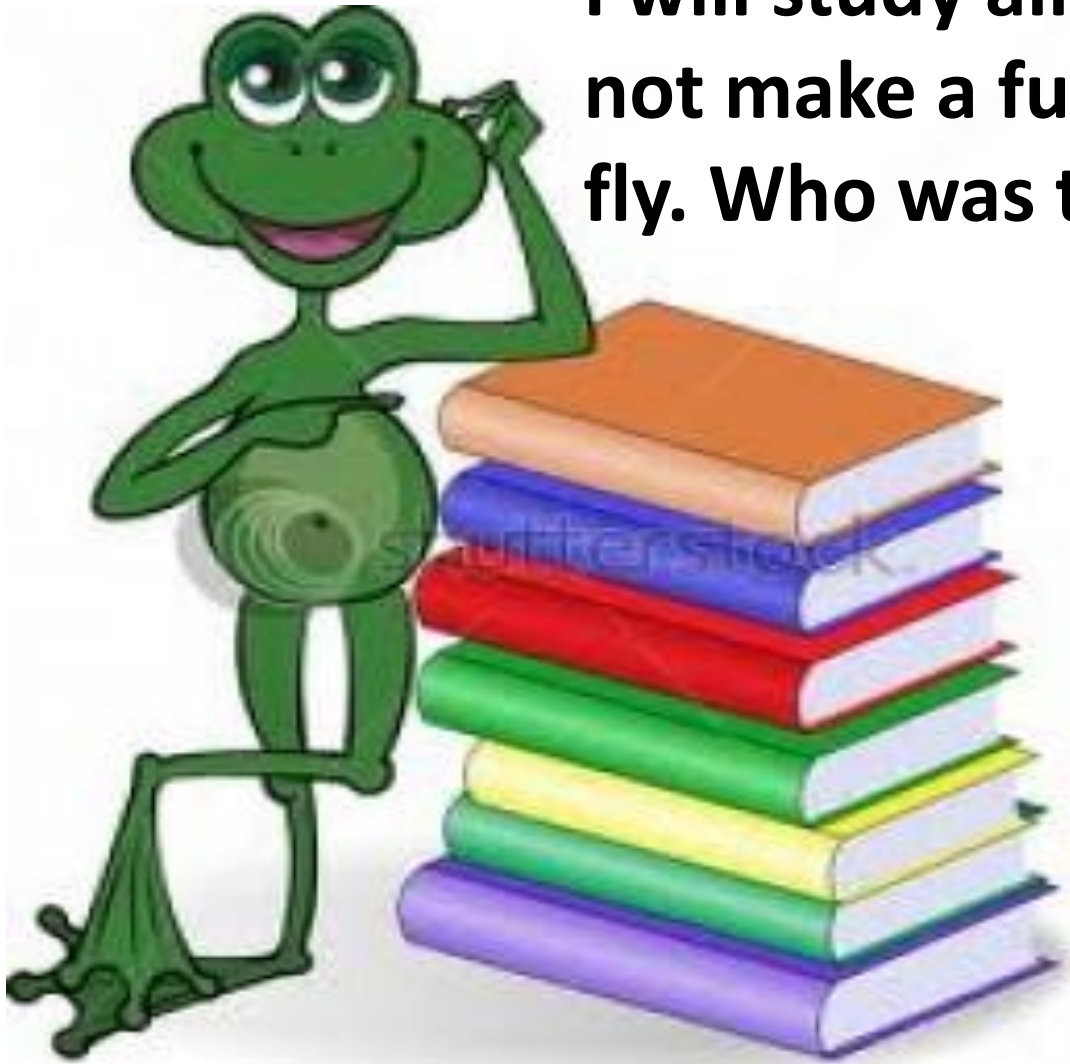
Fable of Felix the Flying Frog



- Once upon a time, there was a man named Clarence who had a pet frog named Felix. Clarence lived a very modest life based on his very modest salary. But he never gave up his lifelong dream of being rich. One day, hit by sudden inspiration, he exclaimed to his pet frog, *"Felix, I have a wonderful idea. We're going to be rich! Because **you** are going to learn to fly!"*

- Felix was terrified at the prospect. He would have turned green at the thought, but he already was. *"I can't fly, Clarence! I'm a frog, not a bird!"*
- Clarence was very disappointed at his pet's response and told Felix: *"Your attitude is not very positive. I believe you can benefit from some intensive flying lessons."*

I will study all these books and not make a fuss. I will learn to fly. Who was that guy, Icarus?



- So off Felix went to a three-day training course where he learned about the history of aviation, the basics of aeronautical engineering such as lift, thrust, drag, etc., gliders, parasailing and the lives of famous fliers. By chance or by design, the instructor did not mention Icarus.

- In [Greek mythology](#), **Icarus** *Íkaros* is the son of the master craftsman [Daedalus](#). Often depicted in art, Icarus and his father attempt to escape from [Crete](#) by means of wings that his father constructed from feathers and wax.

- Icarus' father warns him first of complacency and then of [hubris](#), asking that he fly neither too low nor too high, because the sea's dampness would clog or the sun's heat would melt his wings. Icarus ignored instructions not to fly too close to the sun, and the melting wax caused him to fall into the sea where he drowned. This contains the tragic theme of failed ambition .

- Icarus's father [Daedalus](#), a talented and remarkable [Athenian](#) craftsman, built the [Labyrinth](#) for [King Minos](#) of Crete near his palace at [Knossos](#) to imprison the [Minotaur](#), a half-man, half-bull monster born of his wife and the [Cretan bull](#). Minos imprisoned Daedalus himself in the labyrinth because he gave Minos' daughter, [Ariadne](#), a [clew](#)^[2] (or ball of string) in order to help [Theseus](#), the enemy of Minos, to survive the Labyrinth and defeat the Minotaur.

- clew – a ball of yarn or thread. The etymology of the word "clue" is a direct reference to this story of the Labyrinth.

- Hubris often indicates a loss of contact with [reality](#) and an overestimation of one's own competence, accomplishments or capabilities, especially when the person exhibiting it is in a position of power.

- On the first day after the training was finished, Clarence could barely control his excitement while Felix could barely control his bladder. Clarence pointed out that their apartment building had seven floors. Here was the plan for the "flying" project. Each day Felix would jump out of a window, starting with the first floor and working his way up to the seventh floor.

Do you have a fear of flying? I now have a fear of dying!



- After each jump, Clarence and Felix would analyze how well he flew, isolate the most effective flying techniques, and implement the improved process for the next flight. By the time they reached the top floor, Felix would surely be able to fly like a bird.

- Felix pleaded for his life, but his pleas fell on deaf ears. *"He just doesn't understand how important this is,"* thought Clarence. *"He can't see the big picture."* So, with that, Clarence opened the window and threw Felix out. He landed on the ground with a thud!

- The next day, poised for his second flying lesson, Felix again begged not to be thrown out of the window. Clarence opened his pocket guide to "*Effective Project Management*" and showed Felix the chapter about how one must always expect resistance when introducing new, innovative programs. With that, he threw Felix out the second-floor window. THUD!

- On the third day, on the third floor, Felix tried a different tactic: stalling. He asked for a delay in the "project" until better weather would make flying conditions more favorable. But Clarence was ready for him: He produced a timeline, pointed to the third milestone, and asked, "*You don't want to mess up the schedule, do you?*"

- From his performance appraisal feedback, Felix knew that not jumping today meant he would have to jump TWICE tomorrow. So he just muttered, "*OK, let's go.*" And out the window he went.



**If I were a
Wizard, I could
fly and soar. Do
they have Wizard
stuff at the
Dollar Store?**

- It's not that Felix wasn't trying his best. On the fourth day, he tried to imitate a glider with no luck. On the fifth day, he flapped all four of his legs madly in a vain attempt at flying. On the sixth day, he tried visualization. He tied a small red cape around his neck and tried to think Superman thoughts. It didn't help.

- By the seventh day, Felix, bruised and battered, accepted his fate and no longer begged for mercy. He simply looked at Clarence plaintively and said, "*You know you're killing me, don't you?*"

- Clarence pointed out that Felix's performance so far had been less than exemplary; failing to meet any of the milestones he had set for him. With that, Felix said quietly, "*Shut up and open the window.*" He leaped out, taking careful aim at the large jagged rock by the corner of the building.

I know I did not survive floor seven. But I'm happy again. I'm now in heaven.



And so it was that poor little Felix went to that beautiful lily pad in the sky.

- Clarence was devastated. His project failed to meet a single objective he set out to accomplish. Felix not only failed to fly, he hadn't even learned to steer his fall, Instead, he dropped like a sack of cement. Felix had not listened to Clarence's advice to "*Fall smarter, not harder.*"

- The only thing left for Clarence to do was to conduct an after-project-review and try to determine where things had gone wrong. After reviewing the results and giving the data much thought, Clarence smiled knowingly and said, *"I know what the problem was. **Next time, I'm getting a smarter frog!**"*

- What's the lesson to be learned from this froggy fable? We may have the best of intentions when initiating a project, but sometimes our initial premise, or frog, just won't fly. And how brilliant was Clarence? He was upset that his frog, Felix, could not fly and make him rich.
- *Didn't he realize he could have made a fortune with a **talking** frog?*