POLYTECHNIQUE
MONTRÉAL
TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

INF[67]900E Lecture 7 – Productivity

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Deliverables

Oct 10th (today)
- Two page critical review of a paper
- Template and excellent examples on Moodle
- Evaluated on being **constructive**, **specific, professional, structured**

Oct 17th
- Evaluation of another student's review
- Performed through Moodle, few sentences per criteria above
- Evaluated on having **lessons present, lessons missing, general feedback**

Oct 18th
- SEMTL meeting (https://semtl.github.io/)
- Next Friday at 14:00, at C-3061 Pavillon Lionel Groulx
- Register on website, be respectful

Last Lecture

1. Presenting

This Lecture

1. Productivity (Daily)

Productivity

Essentials

Caffeine

Electronic Dance Music (EDM)

Definition of Productivity

Productivity = Output / Input (economics)

Input
- Spend time/effort effectively

Output
- Work on meaningful contributions

- Want to improve
  - **Quality** of time and effort spent
  - **Quantity** of time and effort (minimize wasted time and effort)

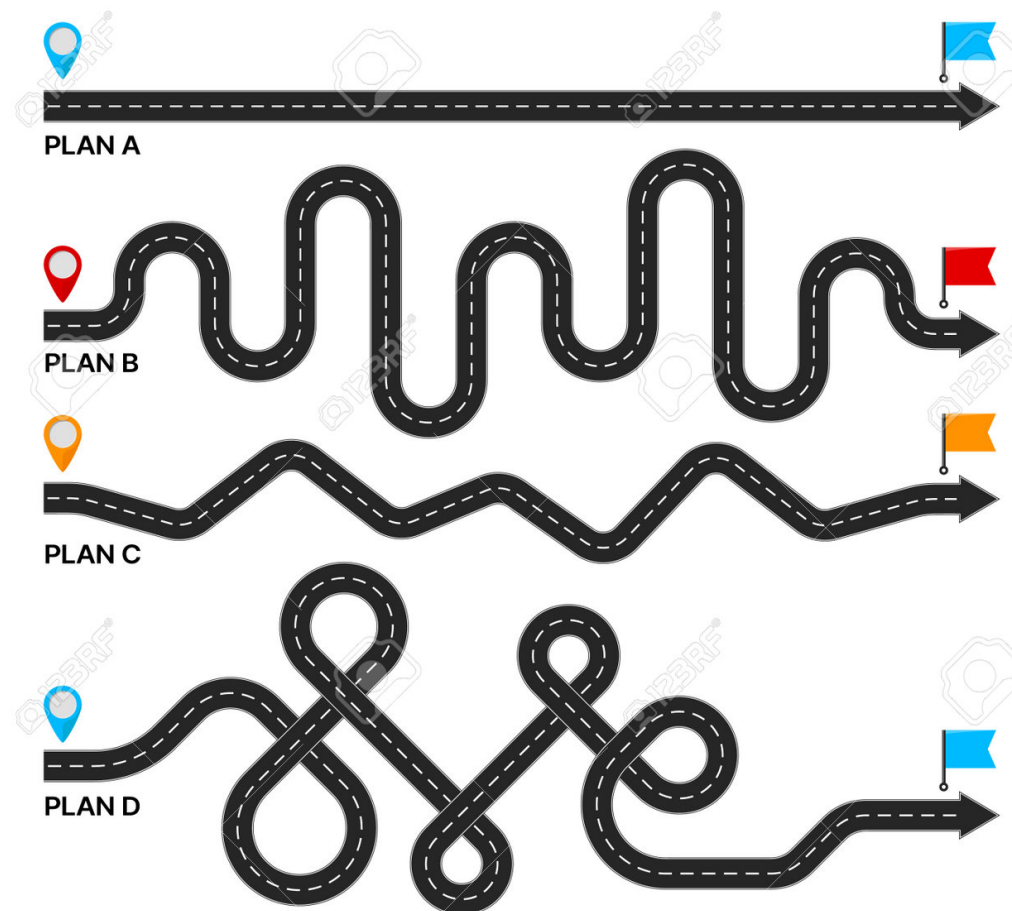# How to be Productive

- Is it this easy?

Long Journeys

- Life doesn't go 'A to B', so:

- Breaking down path to concrete steps
- Iterate
- Remember why you're doing something
- Adapt to changing circumstances

Great Things

The great things are not done by impulse, but by a series of small things brought together. And great things are not something accidental, but must certainly be willed.

— Vincent Van Gogh —

AZ QUOTES

Be Sustainable

- Life is made up of marathons, not sprints
- Be sustainable

- Keep your body and mind healthy
  - Exercise
  - Hydrate
  - Good sleep habits
  - Reduce social media
  - Be social with others

More on burnout next lecture

Three Principles

1) Get it out of your head
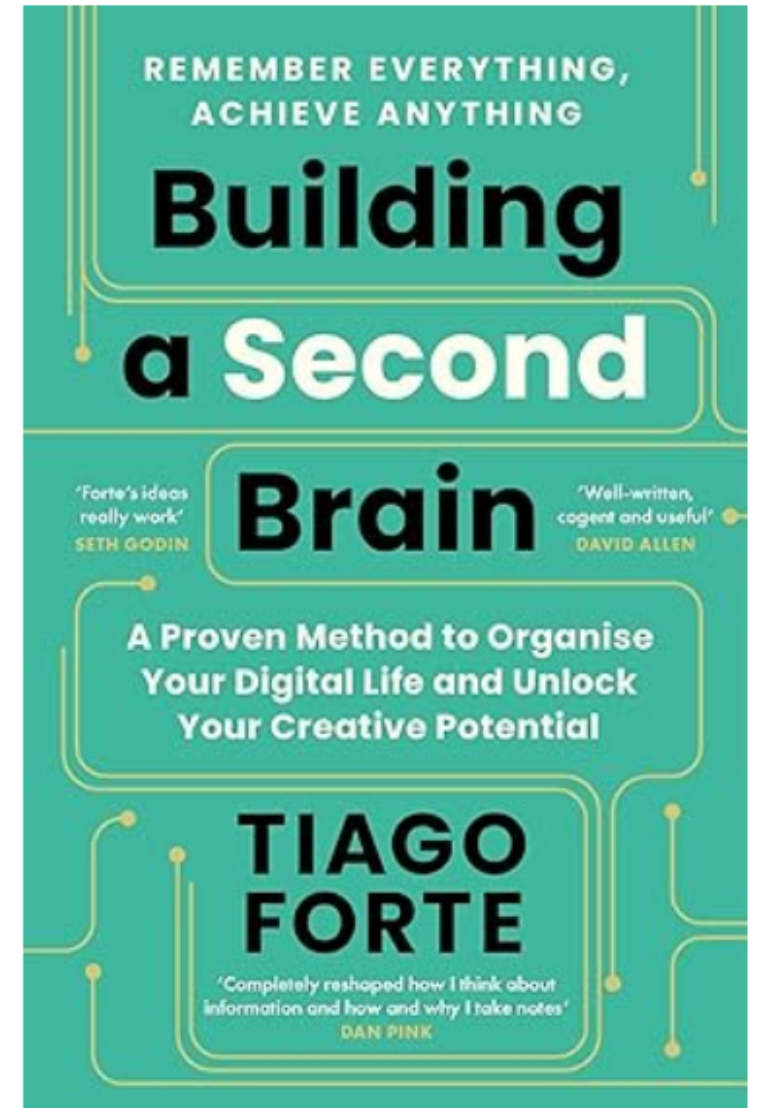2) Remove emotion
3) Reduce friction

Get It Out of Your Head

Human Brains

- Our brains are not well-suited for rigours of academia
  - Long periods of focus
  - Holding deadlines, tasks, priorities in mind
  - Instant communication/demands

- Evolved for survival, day-to-day/seasonal planning

- Our brains are 'lazy' (don't want to spend additional effort)

Digital Brains

- What we have now is technology to hold and process information for us

- Keeping things in our heads takes precious energy, so store it digitally

- Note-taking, calendars, automation, etc

REMEMBER EVERYTHING, ACHIEVE ANYTHING

Building a Second Brain

'Forte's ideas really work'
SETH GODIN

'Well-written, cogent and useful'
DAVID ALLEN

A Proven Method to Organise Your Digital Life and Unlock Your Creative Potential

TIAGO FORTE

'Completely reshaped how I think about information and how and why I take notes'
DAN PINK

Zettelkasten

- German for 'slipbox'

- Connected pages like a wiki
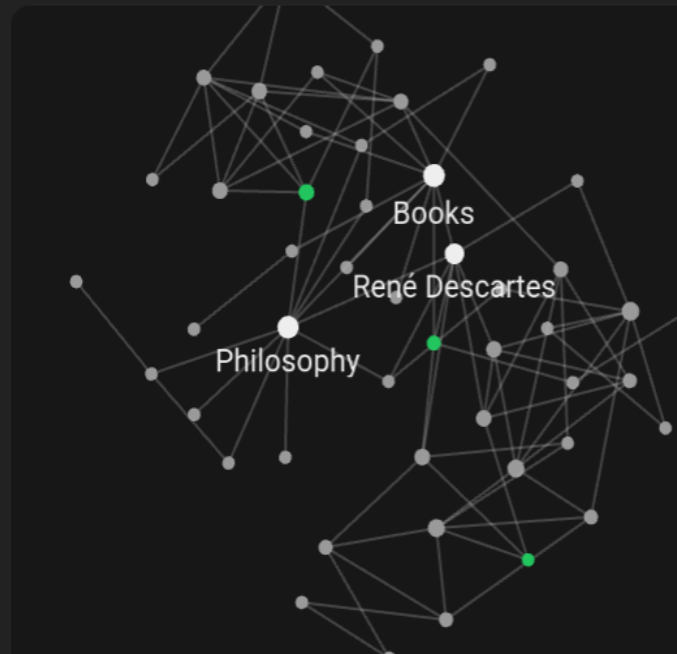
Tools:
- https://obsidian.md/
  - Desktop and mobile
- https://www.zettlr.com/
  - Desktop

- Store facts digitally
- Use search to retrieve it

https://feeei.substack.com/p/the-dirty-lil-secret-about-my-note

Tasks

and/or

Applications / To-do List
From sources across the web

Microsoft To Do   Todoist   Things 3

Google Tasks   ClickUp - Manage Teams ...   TickTick

Any.do   monday.com - Work Man...   Wrike

42 more
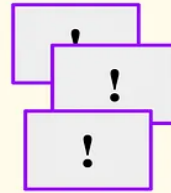
Your email inbox:
• Is for incoming tasks
• Not as task manager/list

https://www.thelazygeniuscollective.com/
blog/how-to-bullet-journal
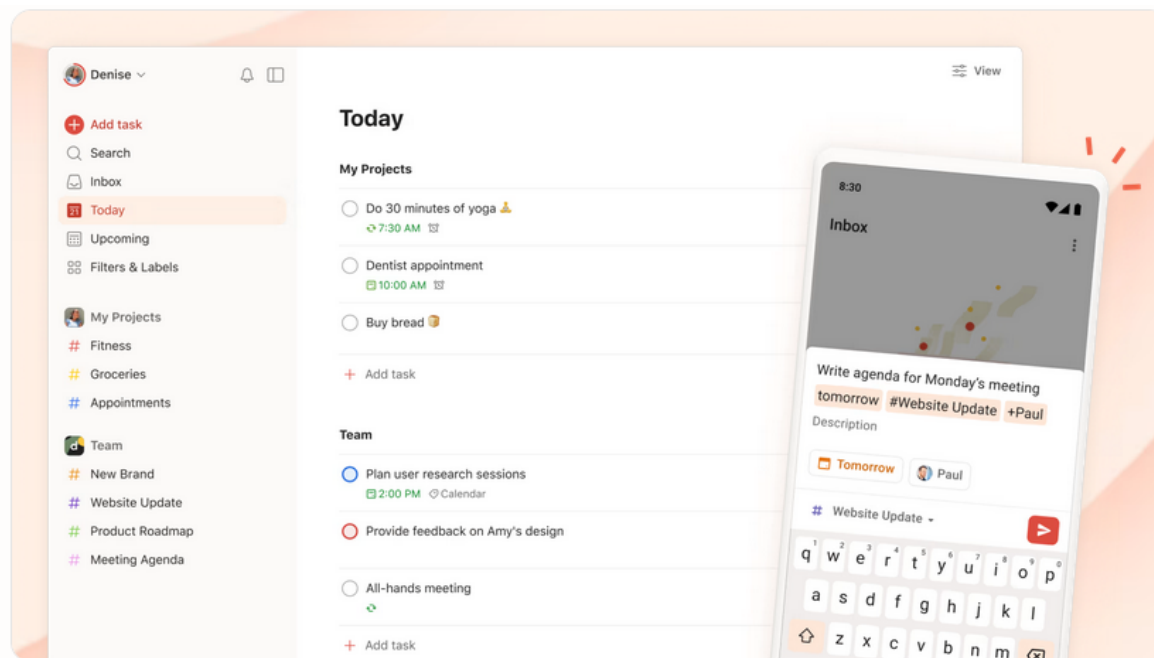
Todoist

Projects, priorities, labels, filters, due dates, sections, sub-tasks

Todoist

Remove Emotion

Biggest Barrier

- Humans are driven by emotions/feelings
- This is healthy and good

- However, difficult to do critical thinking when occupied by emotions
  - Higher brain functions are turned off

- For example:
  - Sending an email while angry
  - Trying to write while stressed/scared

  - Faced with boring task ➞ procrastination

Procrastination loop

Thoughts or reminders about upcoming task or deadline

Negative Emotional Response (stress, worry, fear, guilt, frustration, etc.)

Attempted Emotional repair (Fun / relaxing activity)
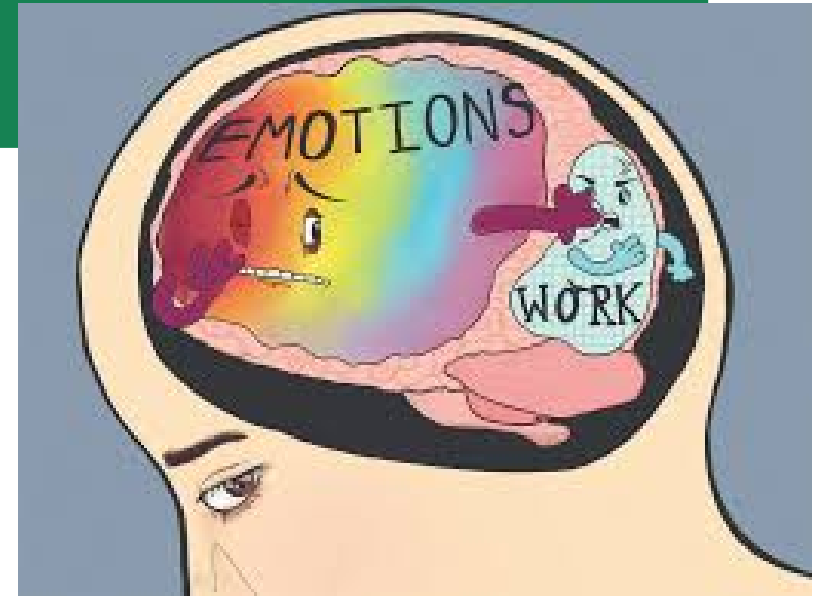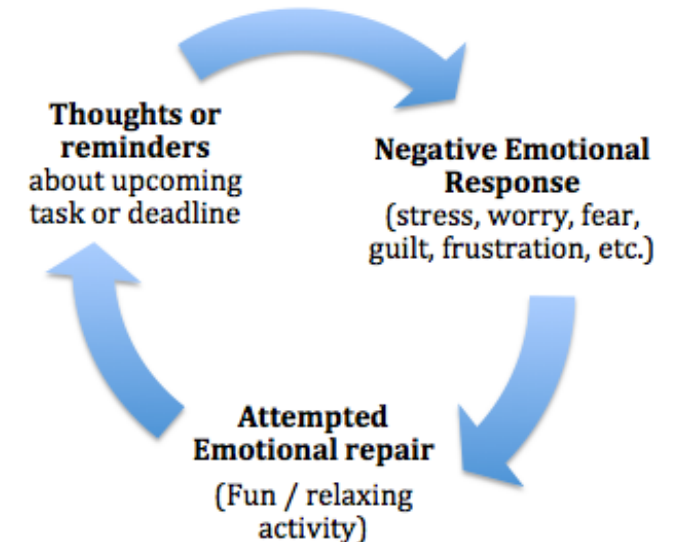
Being a Robot

- You are human and not a robot
- But (when working) try to act like one
- Principles:
  - Get tasks out of your head
  - Know what you're doing next

- When planning:
  - Divide projects into small tasks

- When executing:
  - Pick next task
  - Do task

Make It Easy

- Make it easy for future you

- Break things down into granular tasks
  - I aim for tasks to be 10 min to an hour or two
- Give yourself easy tasks
  - Take vitamins, send an email, start an Overleaf
- Some days are slow
  - Tip: Start with five-minutes on a task
  - Do lots of easy tasks
  - Go with your rhythm
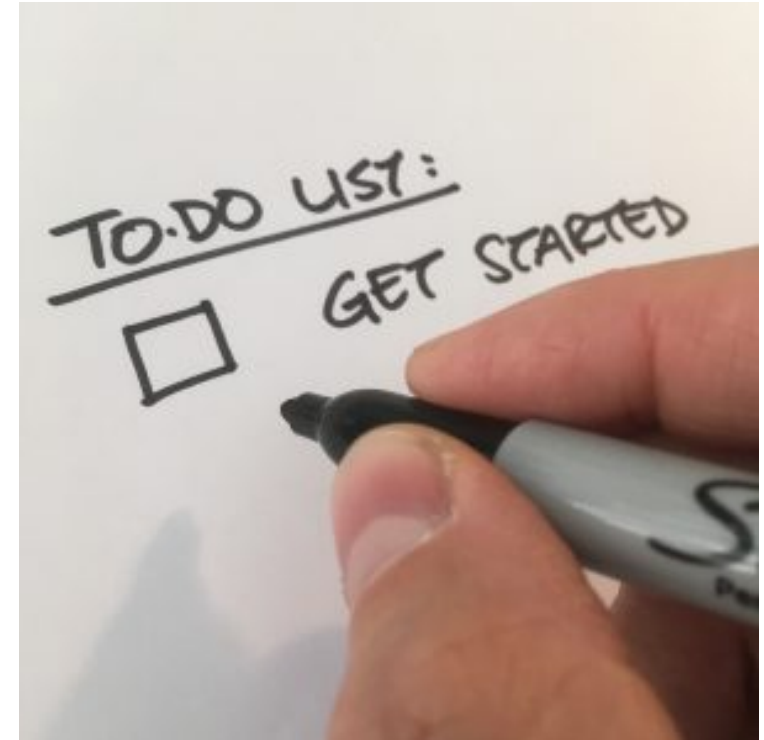
Motivation vs Discipline

- Focus on consistency
- Practice doing it when you don't want to
  - You are human, and won't want to
- Discipline is what gets things done

Find Your Strategies
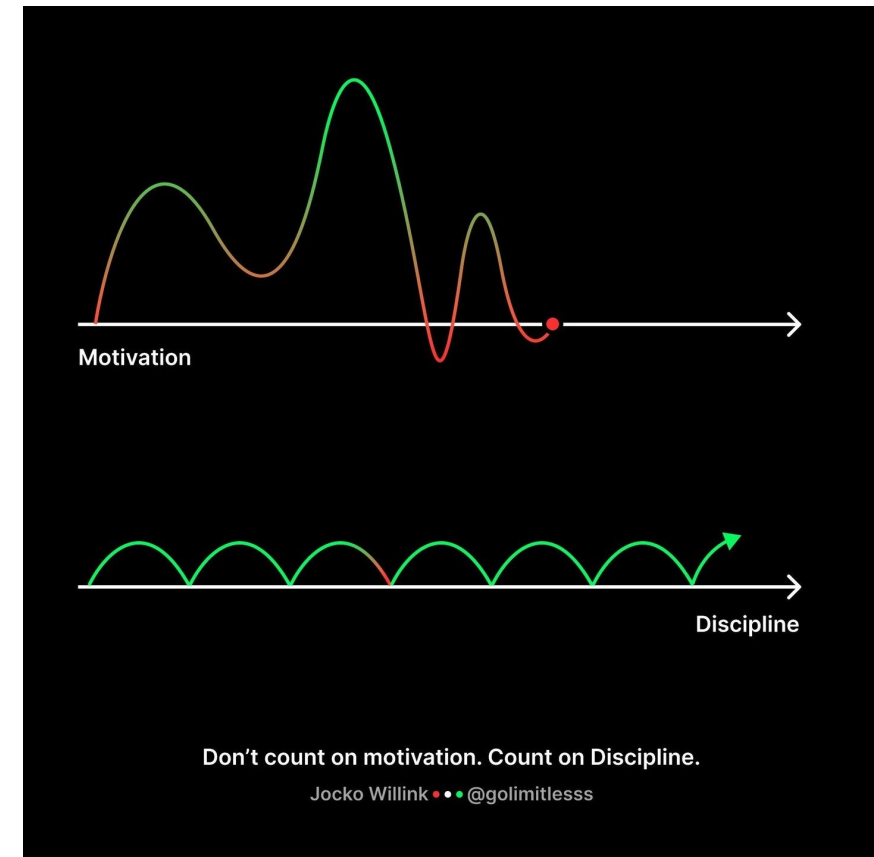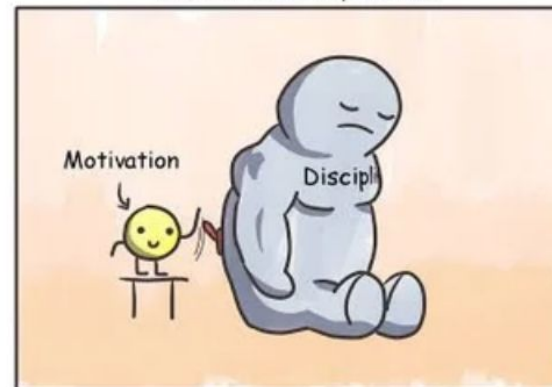
https://todoist.com/productivity-methods

Getting Things Done (GTD)

Systematize the clutter in your brain and get things done

Popular   Task management

Kanban

Move your project through a visual pipeline from start to finish

Popular   Task management

Teamwork   Prioritization

Time Blocking

...and its cousins task batching and day theming. Control your schedule so it doesn't control you
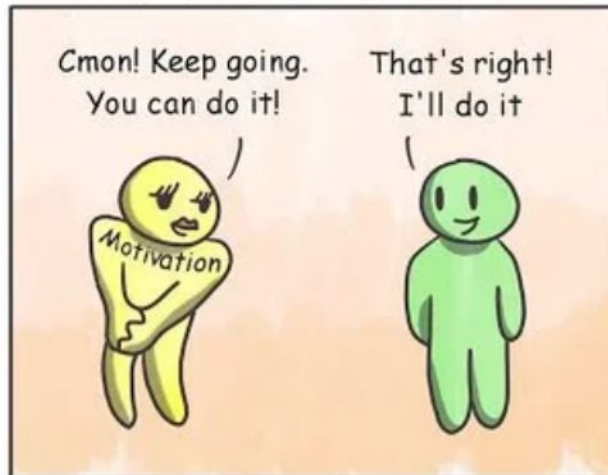
Popular   Focus

Time management

Eat the Frog

If it's your job to eat a frog, it's best to do it first thing in the morning

Popular   Focus

Procrastination   Prioritization

The Pomodoro Technique

Beat procrastination and improve your focus one pomodoro at a time

Popular   Time management

Procrastination   Focus

The Eisenhower Matrix

Avoid the "Urgency Trap" with Dwight D. Eisenhower's famous prioritization framework

Popular   Prioritization

'Getting Things Done' System

Step 1

CAPTURE

Capture anything that crosses your mind – nothing is too big or small! These items go directly into your inbox.

Step 2

CLARIFY

Process what you've captured into clear and concrete action steps. You'll decide if an item is a project, next action, or reference material.

Step 3

ORGANIZE

Put everything in the right place: Add dates to your calendar, delegate action items, file away reference materials, sort your tasks, and more.

Step 4
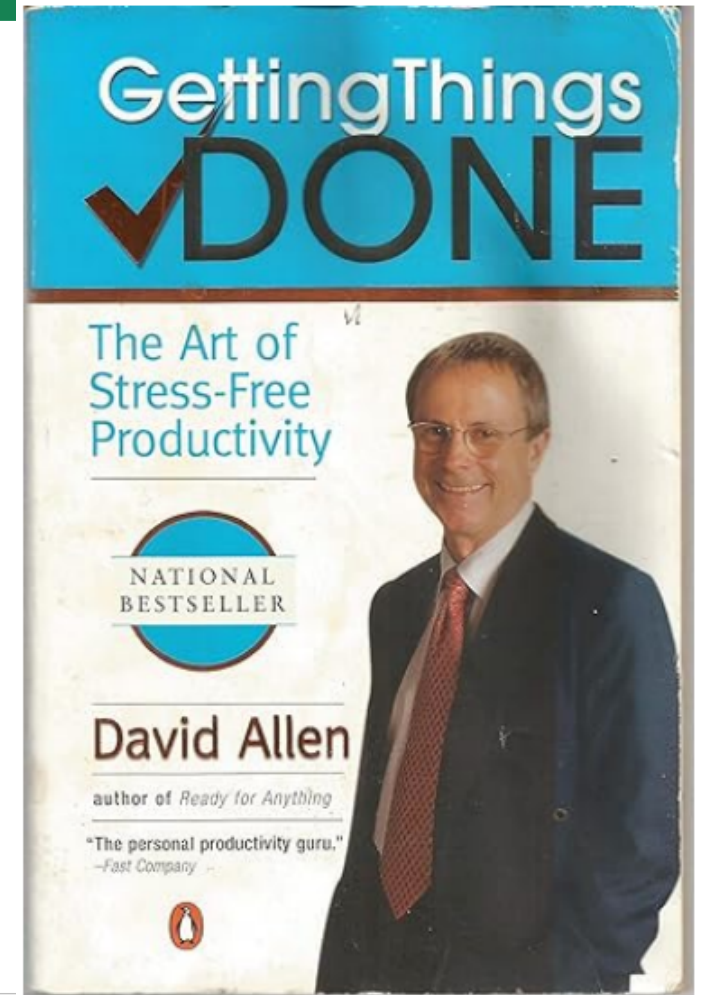
REVIEW

Frequently look over, update, and revise your lists. Do smaller daily reviews and bigger weekly ones.

Step 5

ENGAGE

Get to work on the important stuff. Use your system to know exactly what to work on when.

GettingThings
DONE
The Art of
Stress-Free
Productivity

NATIONAL
BESTSELLER

David Allen
author of Ready for Anything

"The personal productivity guru."
—Fast Company
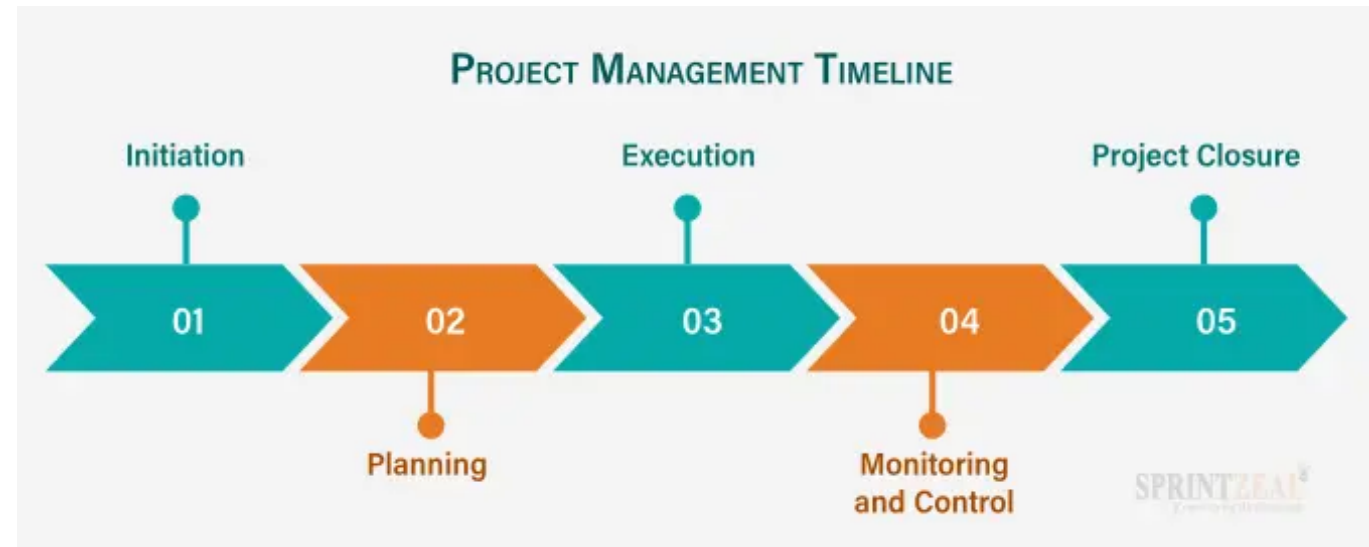
Time Planning is Well-Spent

Step 4

🔍 *REVIEW*

Frequently look over, update, and revise your lists. Do smaller daily reviews and bigger weekly ones.

- Worth it to spend time planning!

TIME PLANNING — NO PLAN

PROJECT MANAGEMENT TIMELINE

Initiation — Execution — Project Closure

01 — 02 — 03 — 04 — 05
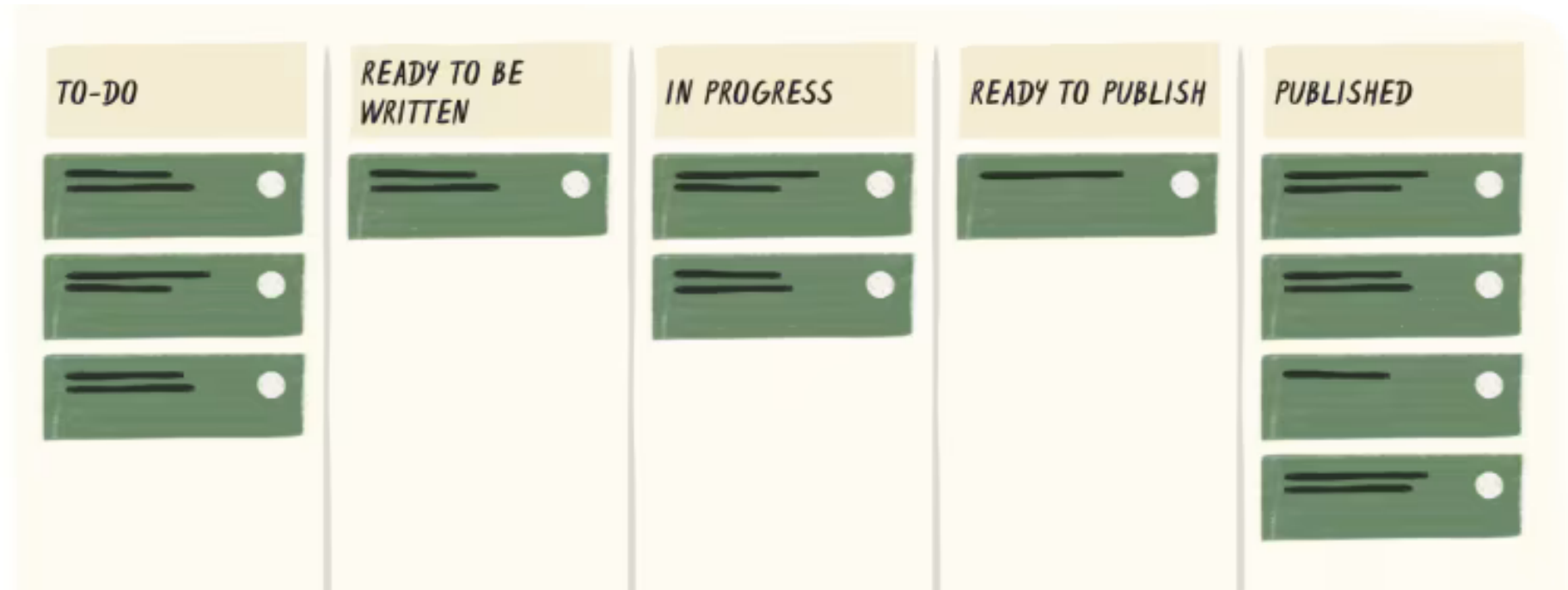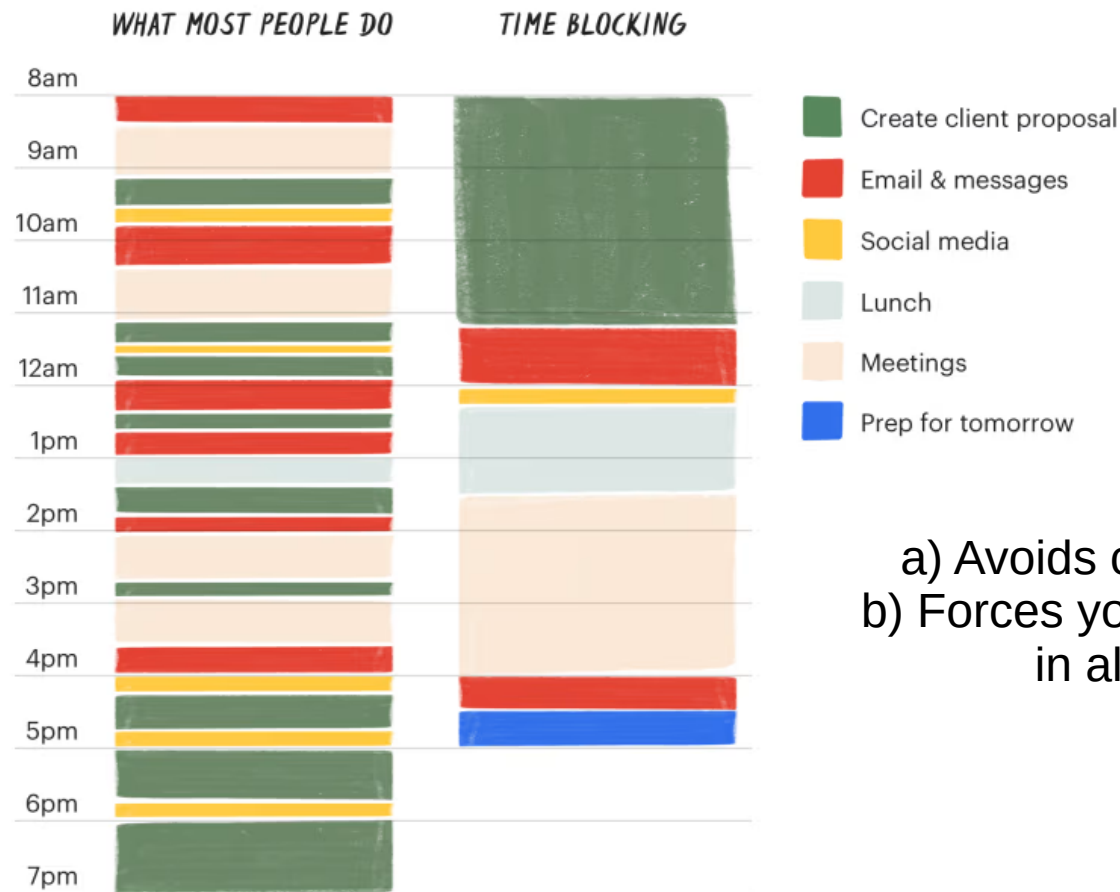
Planning — Monitoring and Control

SPRINTZEAL

Kanban Board

- Tasks are represented as cards
- Cards move between columns as task progresses

- Advantage: Can see the bottlenecks and can calculate bandwidth (number of cards to handle at once)

Time Blocking

a) Avoids context-switching
b) Forces you to complete task in allotted time
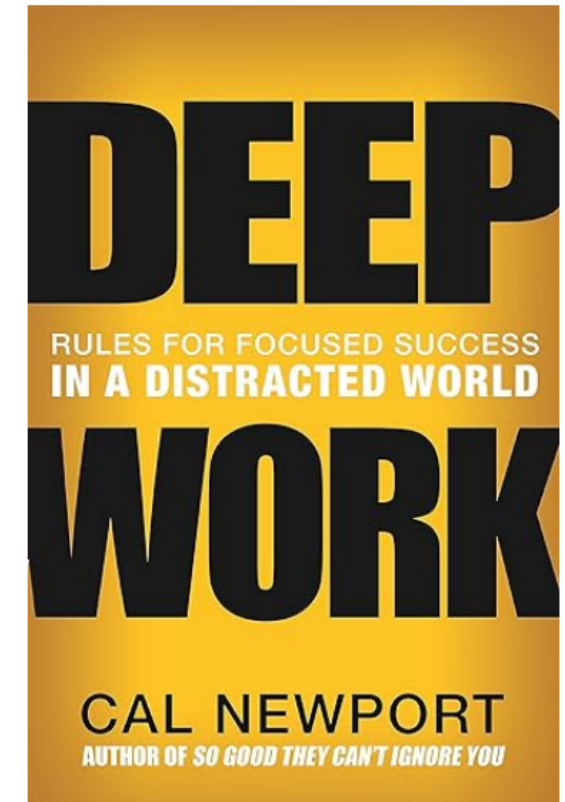
Get into "flow state"

Eat the Frog

"If it's your job to eat a frog, it's best to do it first thing in the morning"

Tackle the most unpleasant task first. Why? You have most willpower then.

Reduce Friction
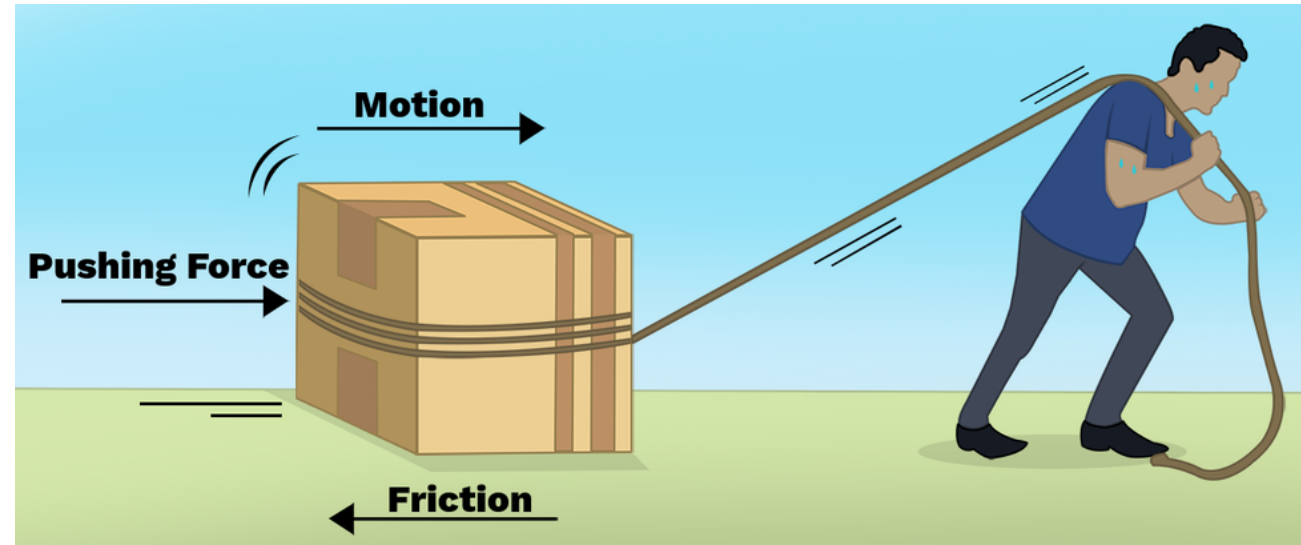
Friction

- Friction is anything that slows us down

- Examples:
  - Clunky tools
  - Distractions (phones, annoyances)
  - Our process (not routine, inefficient)

Remove Friction

- Analyze your environment to identify improvements
  - Cleaner working area, better software, set your routine, automation
  - Ex. Amazon tables, Steve Jobs jeans and black turtleneck,

- Often, can spend money to reduce friction
  - Better tools
  - Automatic coffee machine
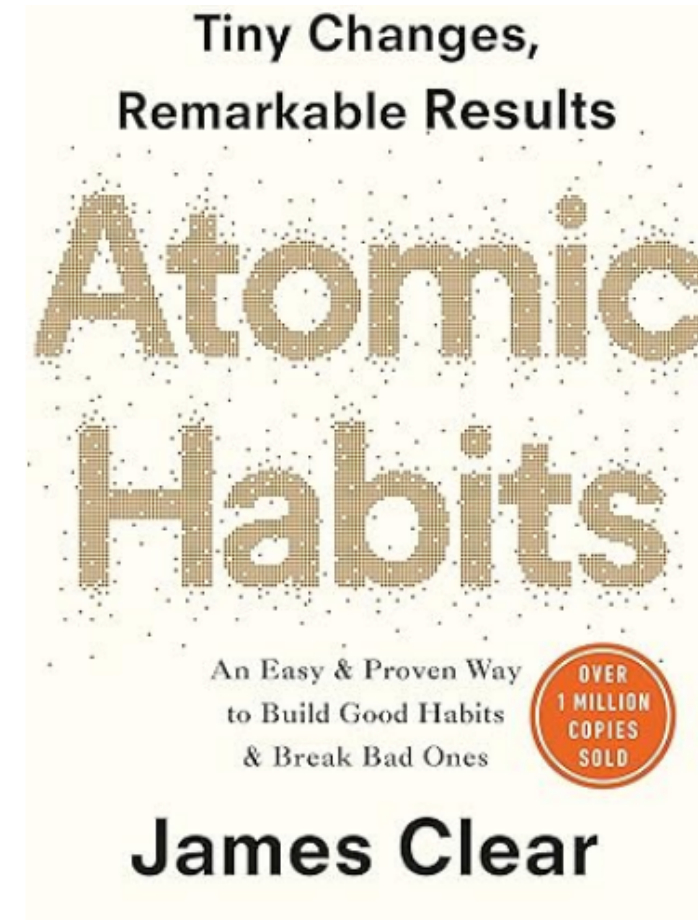 - Monthly metro tickets
  - House cleaning

Habits

- Make good habits/tasks easier to do
  - Example: Running shoes near door
  - Set small goals to get momentum

- Make bad habits harder to do
  - Example: Delete social media apps

Steps:

(1) Make it **obvious**,

(2) Make it **attractive**,

(3) Make it **easy**, and

(4) Make it **satisfying**

Tiny Changes, Remarkable Results

Atomic Habits

An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones

OVER 1 MILLION COPIES SOLD

James Clear

Adjust Work Timing

- Main idea:
  - During the day, we are most productive at different times
  - When are you most efficient?

- Example:
  - No work before breakfast
  - Best work in morning
  - Easy work and emails after lunch
  - Easy half-hour or hour in evening before wind-down
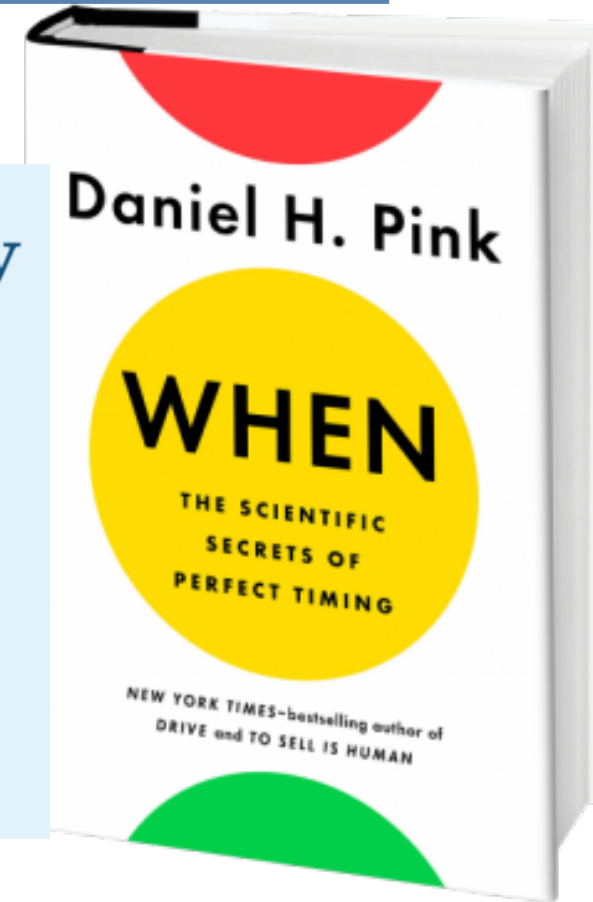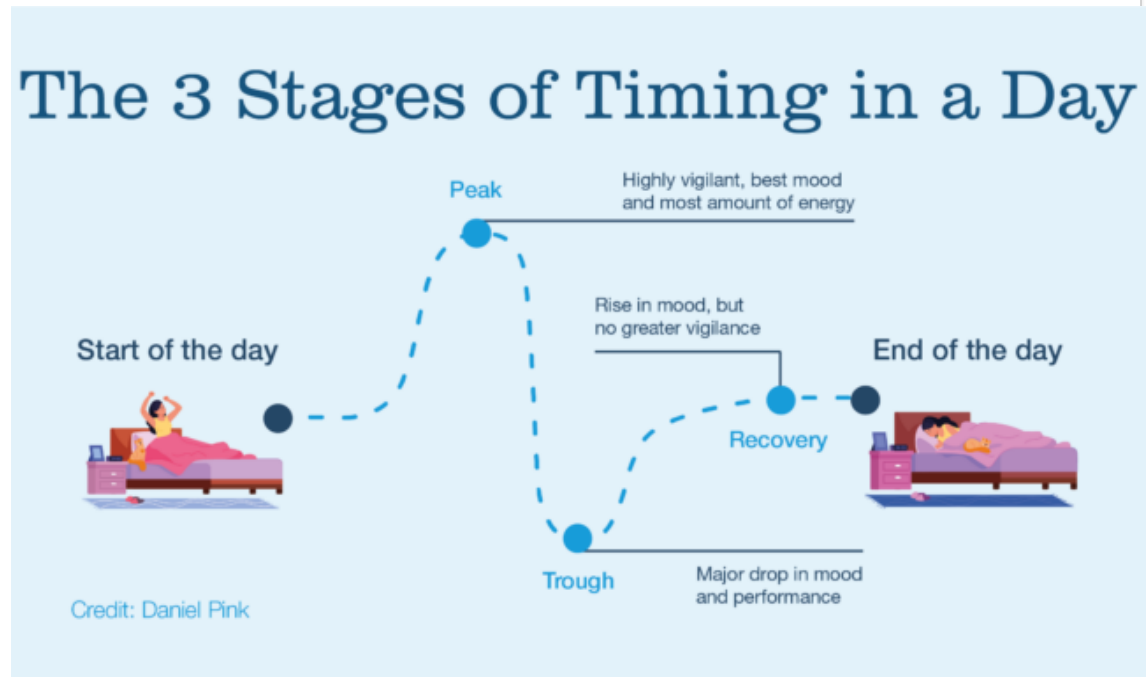
Conclusion

- Worth your time to improve your productivity
- Homework: Go to park with a notebook, sit down, and think about this for a few hours

Lab Session

- In class and in groups, discuss:
  - What your productivity strategies/tools are
  - Think about your daily friction and how to remove it

THANK YOU!

Topics:
- 1. Productivity

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