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## INF[67]900E Lecture 7 – Productivity



**Dr. Bentley James Oakes**

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# Deliverables

## March 14<sup>th</sup> <- new deadline

- NSERC proposal, one page text, one page references
- Must fit NSERC presentation guidelines (see Moodle)
- Evaluated on structure and clarity, through peer review (**due April 11th**)

## Student Presentations (starting March 14th)

- Six minute presentation plus four for Q/A
- PDFs due on day of your presentation
- Can use your computer (preferred) or PDFs on my laptop
- Will be evaluated during presentation

## Talk Summary (due April 11th)

- Have three talks in class (Feb 29, March 21, April 4)
- Summary format on Moodle, at least one full page
- Evaluated based on detail of summary



# Last Lecture

## 1. Presenting



# This Lecture

1. Productivity
2. Guest Lecture by Amine Mhedhbi



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# Productivity



# Definition of Productivity

Productivity = Output / Input (economics)

## Input

- Spend time effectively
- Spend 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)



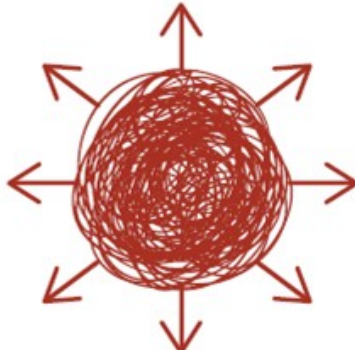
# Essentialism



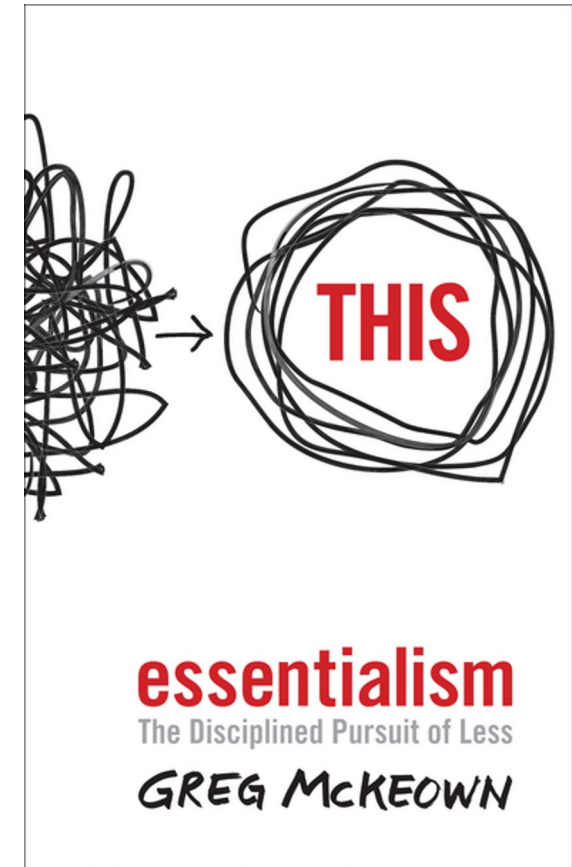
## WHAT'S ESSENTIALISM?

= constantly defining where you can create the most value,  
then finding ways to execute it most effortlessly.

Non-  
Essentialist



Essentialist





# Here, There, and the Steps Between

## Here

- Where are you now?

### Requires

- Self-examination
- Honesty

## There

- Where do you want to go?

### Requires

- Vision
- Clear goals

## Steps Between

- What steps are from here to there?

### Requires

- Planning
- Discipline

**Bring increased awareness to your life**



# Here, There, and the Steps Between Examples

## Here

- Can walk 3k

## There

### Example: Running 5k

- Can run 5k in < 1 hour

## Steps Between

- Couch to 5k program

Week	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	Rest	Run 1 min Walk 1 min Repeat x 10	Rest	Run 2 mins Walk 4 mins Repeat x 5	Rest	Rest	Run 2 mins Walk 4 mins Repeat x 5
2	Rest	Run 3 mins Walk 3 mins Repeat x 4	Rest	Run 3 mins Walk 3 mins Repeat x 4	Rest	Rest	Run 5 mins Walk 3 mins Repeat x 3

### Example: Writing a Thesis

- 1<sup>st</sup> year PhD
- Weak writer
- No topic defined

- Two journal articles
- Industry collaboration
- Exciting topic
- Written thesis

- 2025:
  - Read suggested papers
- 2026:
  - Start journal paper



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# Here, There, and Steps Between

# Figuring Out 'There'

- Where do you want to go? Or 'what do you want to do with your finite life?'

**Years left in life: 65 years x 52 weekends per year = 3380 weekends left**

Focus on meaningful outcomes

- Professionally, personally, "health, wealth, relationships"
- Examples: Become professor, write impactful article, learn French, raise healthy kids, run a marathon, practice painting every weekend...

# Figuring Out 'There'

How to choose?

- Align with your values (ambition, giving back...)
- What is your competitive advantage?
- What is your vision of your future life?
- What are others doing, and what resonates with you or not?
- Can't do everything

How to define?

- SMART goals



## Specific

The goal is concrete and tangible - everyone knows what it looks like.



## Measurable

The goal has an objective measure of success that everyone can understand.



## Attainable

The goal is challenging, but should be achievable with the resources available.



## Relevant

The goal meaningfully contributes to larger objectives like the overall mission.



## Timely

This goal has a deadline or, better yet, a timeline of progress milestones.

# Figuring Out 'Here'

- Where are you now?

What are you **good at**, **bad at**, what's the **real situation**?

Example target: **Writing a thesis**

- Do you find writing easy? Why or why not?
- How much time do you have?
- What's standing in your way? What has held you back?
- Who's available to help?
- Do you procrastinate? Why? (Be honest)
- Do you have anything written? Do you have a topic?
- Do you have a competitive advantage?



# Figuring Out 'Here'

- How to figure this out
  - **Detailed and honest examination**
  - Self-examination is critical
  - And ask friends, supervisor, colleagues, therapist
- This is extremely difficult!
- Don't be hard on yourself
- Everyone is human and usually has imposter syndrome
- Try to remove emotions and look at situation objectively
  - Can require a therapist



# Steps Between

- Not this easy:





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# Detail on Steps Between

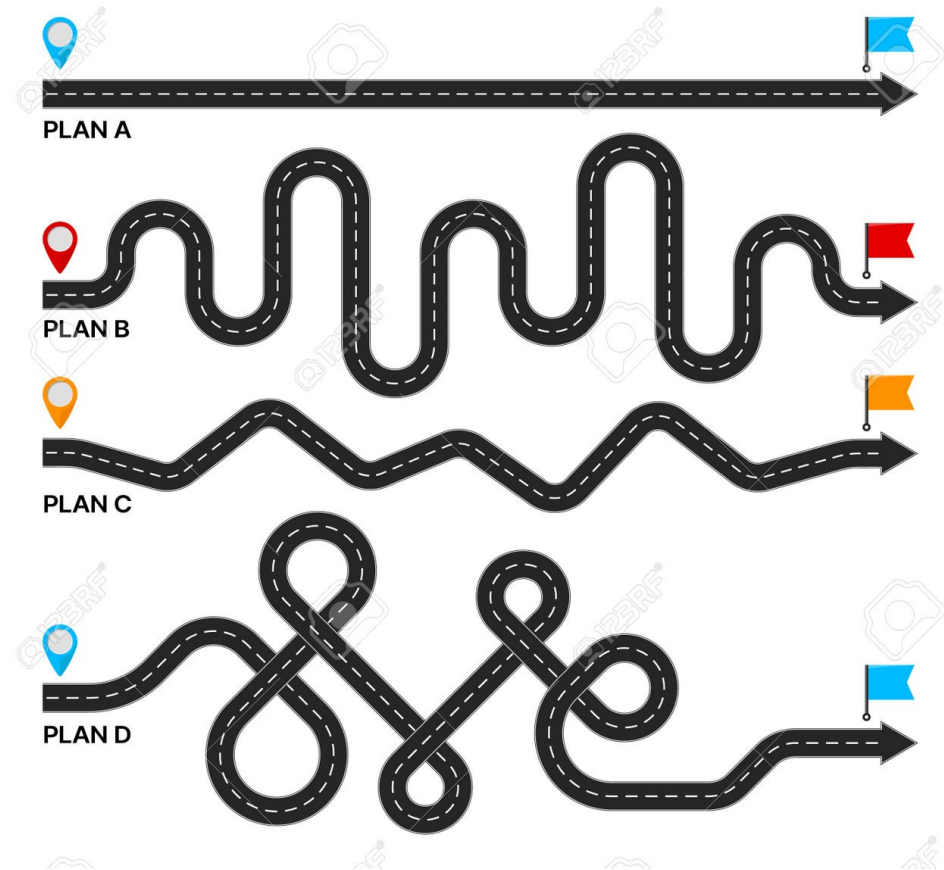


# Steps Between

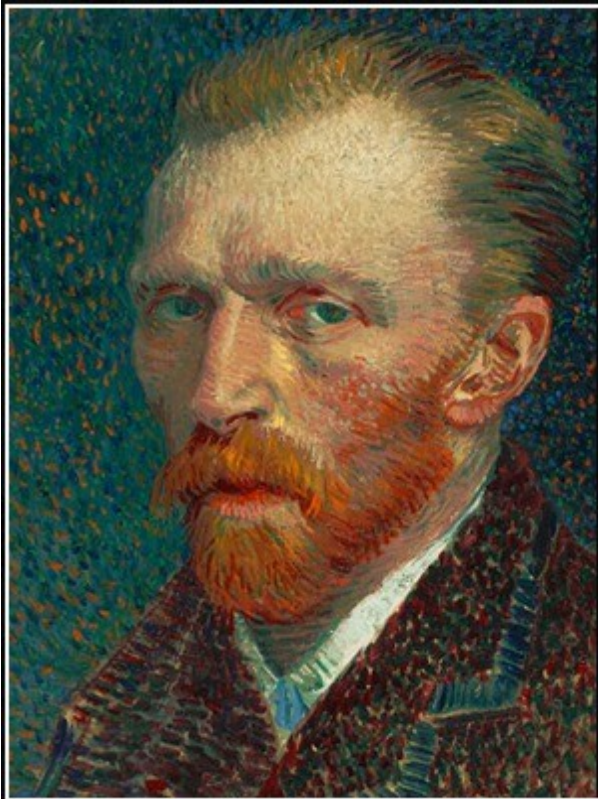
- Life doesn't go 'A to B'
- But things that help:
- Breaking down path to concrete steps
- Iterate
- Remember why you're doing something

Relationships (personal & professional)  
are about expectations

- Be explicit and communicate about them



# 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





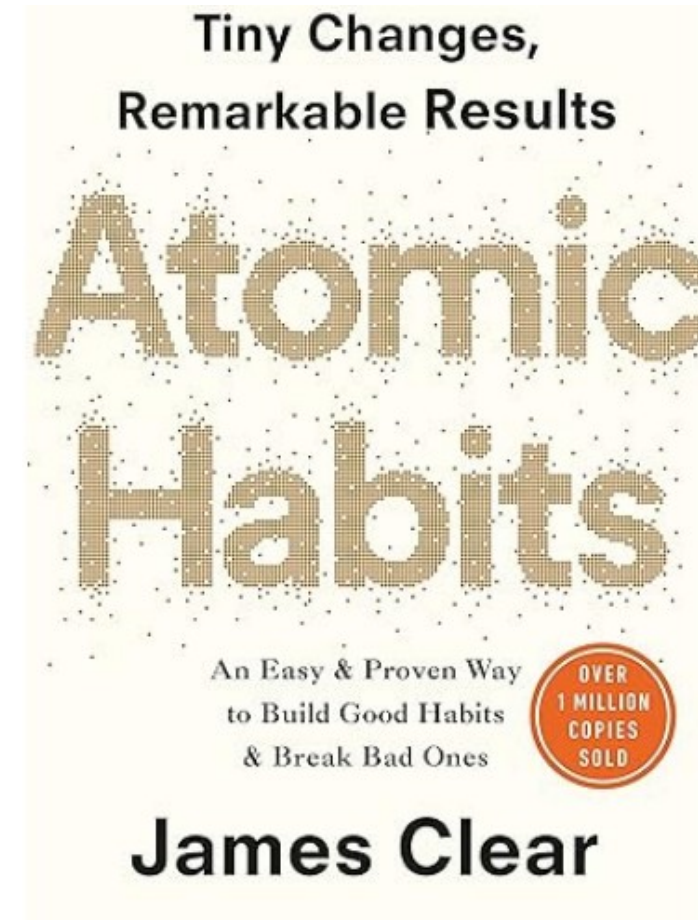
# Be Sustainable

- 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



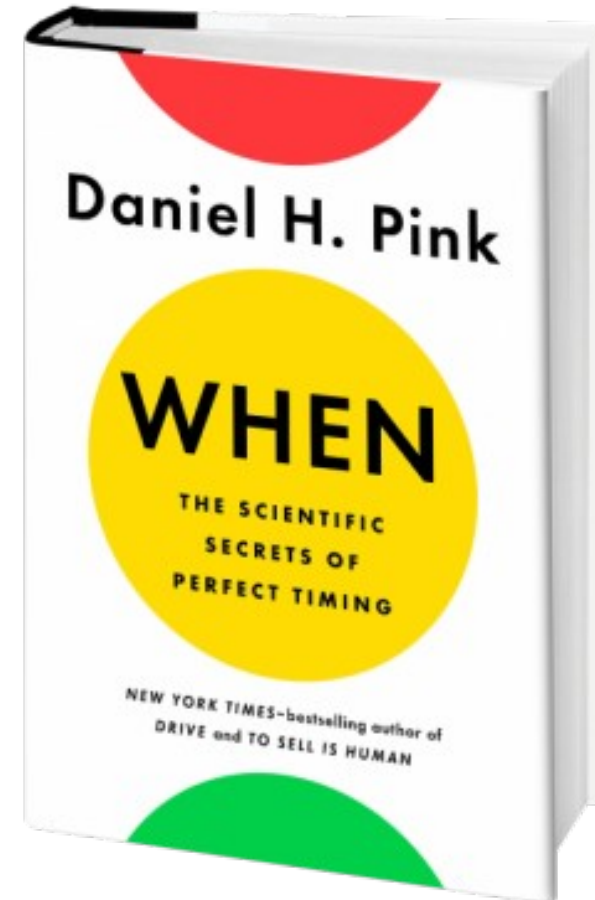
# Habits / Adjust Friction

- 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
- Analyze the environment to see what can change
  - Cleaner working area, better software, set your routine



# Adjust Work Timing

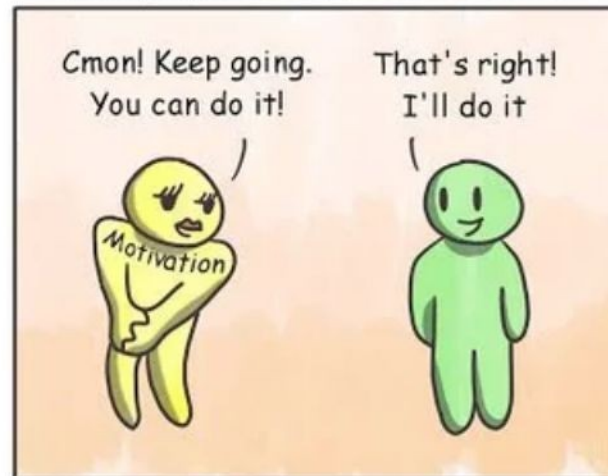
- Best idea:
  - During the day, we are most productive at different times
  - When are you most efficient?
- Example:
  - No work before breakfast
  - Best work in morning
  - Easy work (emails) after lunch
  - One good hour in evening



# 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

How people think motivation works



How it actually works





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# Time Planning



# 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 executing:
  - Pick next task
  - Do task





# Getting Things Done

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.

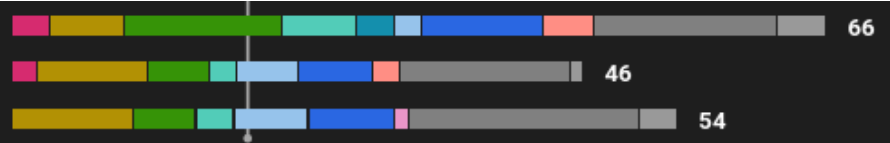
# Todoist

## My Projects

- # Poly 58
- # Projects 16
- # Collaborations 49
- # Students 12
- # Teaching 21
- # Professional Developm... 31
- # Grants 12
- # SEMTL 1
- # Post-Doc - UdeM 6
- # Personal 26
- # Household 43

## 29 Feb · Thursday

- Communication class - Special topics and Amine  
 1/2 10:30-11:30 Teaching / INF6900 - Commu... #
- De la Terre à la Lune et au-delà : la trajectoire de l'exploration spatiale  
 Amphithéâtre Bernard-Lamarre (C-631)  
 12:30-13:30 Poly / Meetings and Presenta... #
- Claudio presentation MDEnet  
 Poly / Meetings and Presenta... #
- Gather related work for ClaudioDS and put in Overleaf  
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-022-23101-3> <https://www.overleaf.com/project/65bd0073c893e91dd68ab482>  
 Collaborations / Pipeline Rec... #
- Work on Santiago paper  
 Deadline March 11 <https://www.overleaf.com/project/64aeb4991f9c35e8b5d08072>  
 Collaborations / Claudio #
- Thomas Bednar: Digital Twins for Sustainable Cities, Buildings and Infrastructure  
<https://jku.zoom.us/j/94045582837?tk=ebN3Q6TsWFniQBL014ZxlGHpS8KHRuhPKLTPhCSjKwY.DQYAAAAV5Y219RZIU2xBLWIHMEJu...>  
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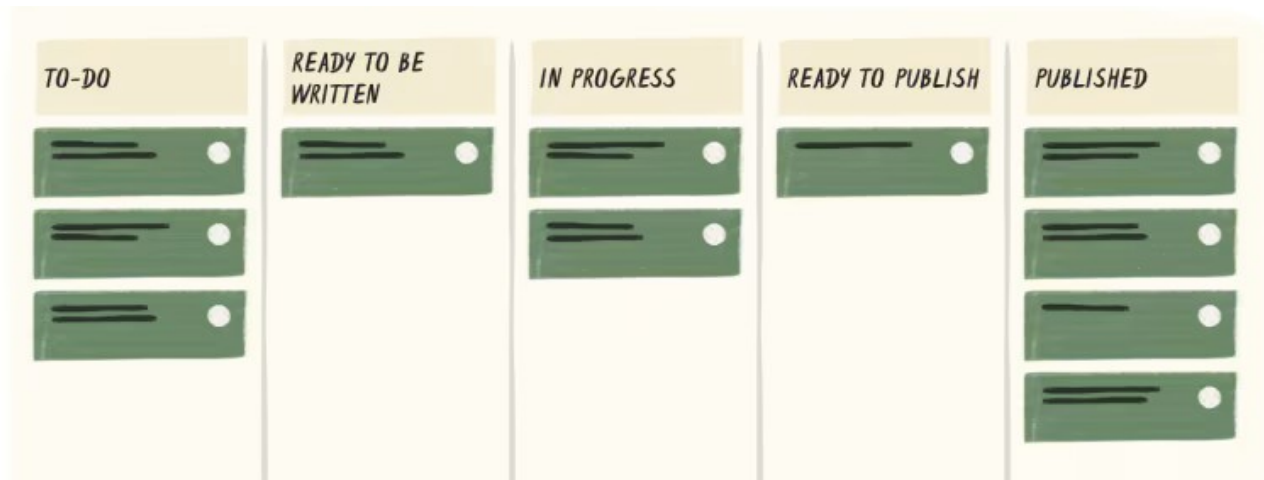




# Productivity Methods

<https://todoist.com/productivity-methods>

Kanban board



Time blocking





# THANK YOU!

Topics:

- 1. Productivity



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