

Achieving TOGETHER

THE FULL FOCUS SYSTEM FOR TEAMS

Achieving Together

THE FULL FOCUS SYSTEM FOR TEAMS

NAME _____

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SESSION 1

Roadblocks to Team Achievement

WHERE WE GET STUCK AND HOW TO BREAK THROUGH

In this session you will identify the top roadblocks to achievement for your team and understand which elements of the Full Focus System will remove them.

The modern workplace is studded with roadblocks to team achievement. Little things fall through the cracks. Miscommunication is common. It's stressful and frustrating for everyone.

The modern office seems tailor-made to obstruct productivity.

It doesn't have to be. Every team has the potential to execute on strategic priorities if they are properly aligned. To generate that alignment, you need the right tool. Today you will learn to break through the roadblocks you face using the Full Focus System. With this system, team members will have greater clarity on their own weekly objectives and daily tasks. You will communicate more effectively, have greater collaboration, and finally be free to focus on your most important work.

Roadblocks to Team Achievement

Let's start by taking a look at the five most common roadblocks to team achievement.

ROADBLOCK 1 / CHAOS

The modern office seems tailor-made to obstruct productivity. Littered with meetings, messages, and distractions, today's work environment makes it nearly impossible to focus on high-leverage work. In this context, you focus on only one thing: the most urgent task *right now*. When everything is on fire, nobody has time for strategic priorities.

ROADBLOCK 2 / THE NEVER-ENDING TO-DO LIST

Picture an Instagram feed. You scroll. And you scroll. It is literally impossible to find the bottom because it doesn't exist. That's the to-do list of today's knowledge workers. You know which tasks will drive your business forward. They're down there, at the bottom of the task-feed. But you can never get to them.

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Your tool for iteration is the After Action Review. When your team conducts this review together, you debrief both failure and success. You learn what's working, what's not, and what to do about it. You start making real progress toward strategic objectives.

SOLUTION 5 / SIMPLICITY THROUGH A READY-MADE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The solution to complexity is simplicity, specifically, a simplified system for implementing change. The tool for producing that is the 90-Day Success Plan. It will guide you step-by-step through the process of installing this system as a team. You will create that plan today. You'll be ready to get your team onboard and gain instant momentum toward your goals—all without disrupting your business.

Time for Your Breakthrough

What if you could remove roadblocks even 85 percent of the time? What if your team were in perfect alignment every week on their key objectives? What would that do for your team morale? For your productivity? For your achievement?

What if you could remove roadblocks even 85 percent of the time?

Today you will learn exactly how to use each tool in this system. When we're done, you'll be fully equipped to create clarity and alignment as a team.

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Now, it's time to turn to **EXERCISE 1** in the back of your workbook to identify your own key roadblocks.

SESSION 2

Your Lifeline to Goal Achievement

MASTERING THE FULL FOCUS SYSTEM

To break through the roadblock of chaos, you need alignment. You need a way to keep every member of your team moving steadily toward your most important priorities every quarter, every week, and every day. In other words, you need a fixed line for your business.

That fixed line is the Full Focus System. When you use the four elements of this system as a team, you ensure that your daily to-do-list will be firmly connected to your strategic priorities.

To break through the roadblock of chaos, you need alignment.

The Full Focus System

The four elements of the Full Focus System are embedded in a tool you already have, the Full Focus Planner. Together, they create perfect alignment with your team and your highest priorities.

ELEMENT 1

Annual Goals

The Annual Goals for your business are your company’s top strategic priorities for the year. If you’ve read *The Vision Driven Leader*, you’ll know that we teach the method of creating an Annual Plan based on your company’s vision, which includes your Annual Goals. You may use terms like *strategic priorities*, *strategic objectives*, or something else. That’s fine.

Others may not have a crystal-clear list of annual priorities. You may have one or a few things that you’d like to achieve over the next few months. But they may not be written into a document like an Annual Plan. That’s fine too. Either way, this system will help you get alignment on the most important things your team is doing together.

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If you do have annual goals or strategic priorities, these are the things you want to accomplish over the next several months to a year. Almost always, they fall outside the scope of daily operations. These are the initiatives that will greatly improve efficiency, open up new markets, develop new products, and the like. It's usually difficult to find time for this work because so much of your time is spent running the company, satisfying the customer, making payroll, and so on.

Where It Lives

In the Full Focus System, Annual Goals are detailed at the very beginning. That starts with your list of Annual Goals in the front of the Full Focus Planner. If you don't have a planner, we have templates of each section in the back of this workbook, starting on page 102. Each goal is fleshed out in more detail on the Goal Detail pages that follow. We recommend that you have 8 to 12 Annual Goals. More than that, and you'll likely lose focus. Fewer than that, and you may not be fully challenging yourself and your team.

The Full Focus System starts, with your team's highest priorities.

Even if this system is new to you, it will produce huge gains in productivity. For now, get centered on this idea: *Your biggest objectives are the starting point for aligning your team to achieve.* How you set those objectives is beyond the scope of today's course. But if you'd like to learn more, we have a bonus module for you in your workbook at the end of this session. It's called the SMARTER Goal Framework. It will guide you through the process of creating Annual Goals that are both challenging and achievable. If you aren't familiar with the SMARTER Framework, you owe it to yourself to go through that module. You'll create ironclad goals each year that will almost certainly drive your company forward. A goal well conceived is half achieved.

So that's where the Full Focus System starts, with your team's highest priorities. These are the things you want to work on, but can never find the time. The rest of the Full Focus System will align your team's focus directly on these objectives.

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Next, you narrow in on three of those objectives to pursue in any given quarter. These are your Quarterly Big 3 Goals, and every member of your team understands them and knows why they matter. They are highly motivated to achieve them together.

Those goals are connected to your work through the Weekly Big 3 Objectives. Each of these objectives is drawn directly from one of your goals. Each objective represents an important step in the completion of a goal.

Finally, everyone has things to do each day. Those Daily Big 3 Tasks are drawn mostly from the Weekly Big 3 Objectives. Of course, there will be some important tasks that must be done to support operations. At least one or two of the Daily Big 3 should advance a strategic objective.

Using the Full Focus System, your entire team is aligned around your highest priorities every quarter, every week, and every single day. How many people are on your team? Let's say five. Let's imagine the possibilities.

What if your team could take 25 actions every day in support of your highest priorities? That's 1,300 tasks in a year. And what if, every quarter, those team members could complete 65 objectives or milestones toward your annual goals? That would be 260 significant objectives a year? How many goals could you achieve? What contribution could you make to your company? How satisfying would it be to achieve at that level year after year after year?

The alignment that comes with the Full Focus System can exponentially increase your team's productivity and impact.

The alignment that comes with the Full Focus System can exponentially increase your team's productivity and impact.

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Turn to **EXERCISE 2** in the back of your workbook and connect your Full Focus Lifeline.

BONUS**Design Your Future**

Now, it's time to find clarity so you can confidently create the life you want. In this lesson, we'll take your resolutions and aspirations and transform them into powerful, compelling, written goals using our proven seven-part framework.

You've probably heard of SMART goals. They have five different attributes, one for each letter of the SMART acronym. General Electric pioneered the approach decades ago. Based on insights from the best goal-achievement research available, we've updated and expanded the system so you can get the results you're after. There are seven attributes of the SMARTER system.

Specific

Focus is power. You can drive the same amount of water through two pipes and create greater force in one just by reducing its diameter. That's what happens when we narrow our goals. The more specific we make them, the more likely they are to engage our focus, ingenuity, and persistence. Vague goals don't inspire us. But specific goals create a channel for our creativity and effort. All it takes is identifying precisely what you want to accomplish. For example, "Learn photography." Is that specific? No. Photography is a huge field. You've got to narrow it down. "Complete John Greengo's 'Fundamentals of Photography' course." Now that's specific.

Measurable

This is important for two reasons. First, without some sort of measurement, how can you tell whether you've accomplished your goal? It's not very helpful—or inspiring—to say you want to make more money this year than last. How much more? There's a big difference between a cost-of-living adjustment and driving up your commissions by 30 percent. By making a goal measurable, you establish the criteria for success.

Second, keeping your goals measurable allows you to track your progress. A measurable goal allows you to set milestones along the way. And, honestly, half the fun is in the progress we make. "We experience the strongest positive emotional response when we make progress on our most difficult goals," says psychology professor Timothy Pynchyl. The only way you know you're making progress is by measuring yourself against the target. This is especially important when it comes to complex goals with several milestones, which are covered in a bonus at the end of this lesson.

Actionable

Goals are fundamentally about what you're *going to do*. So when formulating your goals, it's important to get clear on the primary action. The easiest way to do this is to use a strong verb to describe and prompt the specific action you want to take. You don't want something like *am*, or *be*, or *have*. You want a verb like *run*, *finish*, or *eliminate*.

A couple of examples: "Be more consistent in saving." Is that actionable? No. That's a state-of-being verb. But something like "Deposit 10 percent of each paycheck into my savings account" is actionable. It starts with the verb *deposit*, and it's clear and directive about what you're supposed to do.

Risky

Normally we talk about setting goals that are realistic. That's what the "R" in SMART goals usually refers to. But if we start by asking what's realistic, we're likely to set the bar too low. When we focus on what's supposedly realistic, we can accidentally trigger our natural desire to avoid loss. Then we end up accomplishing less than we might have. After looking at the results of almost 400 studies, goal theorists Edwin Locke and Gary Latham concluded, "The performance of participants with the highest goals was over 250 percent higher than those with the easiest goals."

We all have dreams for a better future. However, our aspirations can feel too fragile and too far away. We jump ahead of ourselves and start worrying about how we're going to achieve those goals. Then we let the *how* overshadow the *what* and downgrade our aspiration.

If we want something better, we have to recognize that discomfort is a catalyst for growth. It forces us to strive, to change, and to adapt. Goals have to stand somewhere outside your comfort zone. If you know exactly how to achieve your goal, it's probably not big enough. If you already have all the necessary financial and emotional resources, it's probably not challenging enough. If you want to really win, you have to go beyond your natural urge to play it safe. You have to leap outside your comfort zone and into your discomfort zone.

You've probably already experienced the benefits of jumping outside your comfort zone at some point in your life. Maybe it was learning a new skill, meeting a new person, or taking on a new challenge. Usually, we don't take the time to enjoy it in the moment. But, looking back, we have to admit that

most of the best stuff in life happens outside our comfort zone. Setting SMARTER goals enables us to strategically engineer those benefits.

You may be asking, “How do you know if you’re reaching far enough?” Honestly, it’s when you start feeling emotions we normally consider negative—fear, uncertainty, and doubt. You’ll really know you’re on the right track when those are mixed up with a surge of excitement and expectation. The trick is setting goals that are appropriately challenging and not just plain crazy. There’s a difference between discomfort and delusion. We can all step into the delusional zone if we’re not careful. Goals in the discomfort zone challenge us and summon our best performance. Goals in the delusional zone invite defeat and merely leave us frustrated and discouraged.

How can you tell you’re veering into the delusional zone? Life experience helps. So does talking with a spouse or someone close to you. Other people are usually better than we are at identifying our blind spots. The main thing is to get outside your comfort zone. That’s where you’ll experience the growth you want, the solutions you need, and the fulfillment you desire.

Timebound

Goals need to include one or more of five different time signatures: a deadline, frequency, start date, time trigger, or a streak target. It helps to break down goals into two broad categories: achievement goals and habit goals. Achievement goals are focused on one-time accomplishments. It could be paying off your credit cards, improving your personal best for a half-marathon, or finishing writing your first novel. Deadlines are essential for all achievement goals. They drive action.

A goal without a set deadline is missing a sense of urgency or direction. “Increase sales revenue 20 percent” is almost meaningless without a deadline. It could happen any time over the next ten years. Adding a deadline creates focus: “Increase sales revenue 20 percent by the close of the second quarter.” When the deadline is reached, you’ll know if you’ve achieved the goal or not.

Here’s an easy opportunity to leap with some intention into your discomfort zone. It might feel better—more comfortable—to assign distant deadlines. But distant deadlines discourage action. You’ll think, “I have so much time. It’s not due for another ten or twelve months.”

Effort dissipates as time expands. But the reverse is also true. Short time horizons concentrate our effort. The tighter the deadline, the more focused and productive you can be. A Locke and Latham study found workers in one field experiment were able to keep production at 100 percent even when their time was cut by 40 percent. The new deadline created huge gains in productivity. And we can experience similar gains in our personal and private lives when we set near-term goals, leaving more margin for other pursuits.

It’s a little different when it comes to habit goals. Instead of one-time accomplishments, habit goals involve regular, ongoing activity. Think about a daily meditation practice, a monthly coffee date with a friend, or walking each day after lunch. There’s no firm deadline because you’re not trying to accomplish just one thing. You’re trying to maintain a practice. But time signatures are still essential. The most effective habit goals utilize several, including:

- **Start date**, that’s when you intend to begin installing your new habit
- **Frequency**, that’s how often you plan to do the action.
- **Time triggers**, that’s when in the day you want to do the action.
That’s important because a specific time makes it easier to be consistent.
- **Streak targets**, that’s how many times you have to do the action before you can consider the habit second nature.

To help you out, there are examples in the back of the coursebook.

Exciting

Researchers say that we stand a better chance of reaching our goals if we are internally motivated to do so. External motivations might work for a while, but if we’re not getting something intrinsic from the goal, we’ll lose interest.

The problem is most of us set goals we think are good for us. And if we’re really being honest, we often set goals *other people* think are good for us—spouses, friends, bosses, and so on. The trick is to set goals that are not only personally important but also personally inspiring.

“If you want to succeed with your professional growth goals, choose one or two key areas of focus that align with what really matters to you,” says time management coach Elizabeth Grace Saunders. If you don’t find your goals personally compelling, you won’t have the motivation to push through when things get tough or tedious. This is where you’ve got to be honest with yourself. Ask, *Does this goal inspire me? Does it engage my heart? Am I willing to work hard to make it happen?* You might even ask if you find it fun. All of these questions get at something we’ll cover in the next step—finding your why.

Remember, we’re setting risky goals. We’re going to be tempted to quit at some point. Only an exciting goal can access the internal motivation you need to stay the course and achieve your goal.

Relevant

If we’re going to succeed, we need goals that align with the legitimate demands and needs of our lives. This attribute comes at the end of the list because it’s a good way to gut-check your goals before committing to them. We can all stumble on this point if we’re not careful. Are you a working parent with young kids? Your goals will look much different than an undergrad or an empty nester. Depending on your circumstances, going to med school might not be in the cards right now. And pursuing a new weekend-gobbling hobby might put unwanted strain on your family. You need to set goals that are relevant to your actual circumstances and interests.

You also need goals that align with your values. This should be obvious, but we’ve already seen that we sometimes bend to outside pressure and set goals that go against the core of who we are. The pressure could be social, professional, whatever. But you need to resist the temptation to gear your performance for others, especially if it somehow goes against your values. You have to set the right kind of goals that work with who you are and what you care about.

Finally, you need goals that align amongst themselves. They have to be relevant together. Setting multiple conflicting goals will only create friction and frustration. If we’re working against ourselves, we’ll experience more heartburn than progress. That goes for setting too many goals in general. You don’t need one big, crazy leap to land in the delusional zone. Sometimes you can drift there with the accumulated demands of multiple goals. This happens when people plan major deadlines simultaneously or

stack up projects one after another without enough margin. You know what happens next. It’s a train wreck just waiting to happen.

Sometimes our aspirations are far bigger than our calendars. The main thing to watch here is your bandwidth. We recommend setting between 8 and 12 goals per year. And limit yourself to two or three major deadlines per quarter. In Lesson 5, we’ll see how this quarterly focus aids achievement. But suffice it to say for now that balanced effort is critical for success. Overloading your goal list will undermine your focus along with your results.

So that’s the SMARTER system. SMARTER goals are specific, measurable, actionable, risky, time-bound, exciting, and relevant.

This is a serious roadblock to team productivity. You may gain alignment on your Weekly Big 3 Objectives. But then each of you must go back to work. And you find an inbox full of email. Half-a-dozen new tasks in Asana, and two more meetings on your calendar than were there last night.

That's how teams get pulled off track. They gain alignment, but it doesn't last. Everyone has too many other things to do, and each one of them is crying out for attention. You need to find the bottom of that never-ending to-do list so you have the space to focus on your highest priorities.

An Ad Blocker for Tasks

Online ads are a great nuisance. But you can install an ad blocker on your Web browser. That's a little app that runs in the background to prevent ads from loading when you open a website. It's amazing! True, it makes some Web pages look odd because they're mostly grayed-out boxes. But that makes it much easier to focus on the real content.

You need that for your to-do list, a filter to block out the low-leverage tasks so they don't distract you from your most important work. That filter is the Freedom Compass. The Freedom Compass quickly identifies the tasks that will drive results for you in the context of your team. When you understand the four zones of the Freedom Compass, your team will be free to focus more time on high-leverage tasks and do less of everything else. Here's how it works.

Passion + Proficiency = Productivity

The Freedom Compass identifies the tasks for which you have both passion and proficiency. By passion, I'm talking about work that energizes you. Has there been a time when you were working on something and thought, I can't believe they're paying me to do this? If so, you know what passion feels like. You're most motivated and satisfied when doing things you love.

Proficiency is something else. Proficiency doesn't refer to how much you enjoy doing something; it describes how well you do it. There may be something you're extremely passionate about but aren't especially skilled at.

Proficiency and aptitude are not the same. Aptitude is an ability or knack for doing something. Many people can play the guitar. They have an aptitude for it. Proficiency is something more. When you are proficient at something, you don't simply have an ability to do it. You also generate results that other people can measure and reward. For executives and entrepreneurs, that mostly comes down to

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ZONE 1 / THE DESIRE ZONE

The Desire Zone is the place where your passion and proficiency intersect. This is where you can unleash your unique gifts and abilities to make your most significant contribution. Working in your Desire Zone has a profound effect on personal and team productivity. It's the best way to win at work and succeed at life. That's because you'll do more high-leverage work in less time, freeing up margin for family, friends, and other interests.

THE DEVELOPMENT ZONE

There is a fifth zone called the Development Zone, and it's used to gauge work outside your Desire Zone but potentially moving toward it. Maybe you're high-proficiency/low-passion, but you're developing passion. Or you're high-passion/low-proficiency, but you're building proficiency. This progression is important to keep in mind because our experience affects both passion and proficiency.

We don't come with default or fixed settings, being either naturally passionate or proficient. Rather, we all begin with curiosity, interest, and possibly some raw talent. Time and practice play a part in where a task falls, and that task can move based on how we evolve in relation to it. In other words, passion and proficiency are the result of personal or professional development. Mindset and experimentation are big factors in making that shift. We sometimes know a certain task is not in our wheelhouse. Other times we just need more experience with it. If we have a hunch we could develop passion and proficiency with a task, we should stay open-minded about it.

The Freedom Compass for Teams

You can use the Freedom Compass to help your team become more productive and achieve a greater impact. That begins with having each team member identify their own true north—their Desire Zone. From there, a team leader can help arrange team assignments to achieve a better fit for each member and the team as a whole.

Team members should remember that very few people are able to work in their Desire Zone 100 percent of the time. That will depend largely on the degree of autonomy you have in your work, which may be related to your place within the company. Your Desire Zone represents an ideal, not an inalienable right. The point is not to be dissatisfied to discover that some of your tasks lie outside your Desire Zone. Rather, it is to do as much work as you can within it. The Freedom Compass will show you which direction to move in order to make your best contribution. And if it reveals that you're really better

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suiting in another position, that's a win too. Both you and the company will be best served when you're in a position close to your Desire Zone.

In the short-term, the Freedom Compass is an opportunity for leaders to create greater alignment of teammates to tasks, which will result in higher achievement. The tasks in one teammate's Drudgery Zone might fit squarely into another's Desire Zone. It may be possible to tweak their assignments to give each one more opportunities to do work for which they have both passion and proficiency. That's a win for everyone.

In the longer term, the Freedom Compass is a tool for creating a high-achieving team. It's a guide for creating position descriptions that ensure new hires have the passion and proficiency to excel in the job. And it can be a career planning guide for current employees. The Freedom Compass will help you assemble a winning team, though that may take some time to achieve.

Finding the Sweet Spot

Let's imagine for a moment if each member of your team were able to align even half of their tasks with their Desire Zone? What effect might that have on their alignment with the team's objectives? On their productivity? On their positive attitude toward the work and the team? As a team leader, what might you be able to accomplish with a team on which each member was 25 or 50 percent more effective? It would likely transform your business.

The more passionate and proficient you and your teammates are, the more productive you will be.

The more passionate and proficient you and your teammates are, the more productive you will be. To have every team member perfectly aligned with their Desire Zone is an ideal few teams realize. But even adjusting the alignment by a few degrees northward could produce outsized results for your team. When you are excited about your work *and* very good at it, you can deliver your best contribution to your company. Imagine what you could achieve together.

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Now, it's time to work on your own Freedom Compass Task List. Turn to **EXERCISE 3**.

SESSION 4

How to Get Your Team in Sync

A NO-FAIL PLAN FOR SCHEDULING

For many knowledge workers, each day is a patchwork of meetings, tasks, and interruptions. That results in lots of task switching. For example, you come out of a meeting and start writing your action list. Before you can finish, you get a phone call. You're listening with one half of your brain and trying to remember the tasks you agreed to with the other. Or you work for 15 minutes drafting a spending proposal, then get a drop-in visitor. You set aside that task for a brief chat, then quickly scan your in-boxes before returning to the proposal. On a typical day, you might communicate with a dozen people, attend two or three meetings, and work intermittently on ten or more tasks. Multitasking is inevitable.

The problem with that is that the human brain doesn't really multitask. Instead, as journalist John Naish says, "it switches frantically between tasks like a bad amateur plate-spinner." When you jump between tasks, according to Georgetown computer scientist Cal Newport, "your attention doesn't immediately follow—a residue of your attention remains stuck thinking about the original task." Switching isn't seamless. "Attention residue" gunks up our mental gears.

One study by the University of California at Irvine found workers averaged twenty-five minutes to resume a task after an interruption like an email or phone call. By breaking our focus, switching also slows our processing ability. When we focus on one task, we filter what's important for the completion of that task. However, when we multitask, we compromise our ability to decide what's relevant and what's not. We start wasting time by processing useless information, and that keeps us in a downward spiral of increasing busyness and decreasing results.

Have you ever finished a hectic day wondering what you actually accomplished?

We all develop coping strategies. But if you multiply the impact of attention residue and irrelevant activity over an entire day of interruptions, the cost adds up. Have you ever finished a hectic day wondering what you actually accomplished? That's why. You stay busy but lose ground on the few things that matter most. You need a way to carve out the time you need for focused work.

That is not a new insight. Centuries before the age of smartphones, email, and instant messages, Lord Chesterfield warned his son against the dangers of multitasking. "There is time enough for everything

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in the course of the day, if you do but one thing at once," he said, "but there is not time enough in the year, if you will do two things at a time."

To focus on one thing at a time is difficult to do on your own. As a team, it's even more complex. How do you synchronize the activities of several people so they can communicate efficiently, meet as necessary, yet not interrupt one another constantly?

The solution is remarkably simple. You do that by leveraging the Ideal Week as a team. When you do, you will free up hours, even whole days, for the focused work that drives progress.

We'll talk about the Ideal Week in a minute. First, you'll need to understand two concepts that make the Ideal Week so powerful. Those are Contexts and Batching.

Contexts

Nearly every home has three basic types of spaces: a kitchen, a bedroom, and a living room. There are others, of course, but those are the basics. And each one has its own purpose. You don't generally prepare food in the living room or sleep in the kitchen. In the same way, your days all contain three basic contexts. They're like rooms in a house. To create an ideal week, you need to be familiar with these and know what they're for. These will form the walls that keep your work life from overflowing into your personal life. They're also a barrier against the interruptions and distractions that destroy your focus.

Two of these contexts were first identified by Michael Gerber in *The E-Myth Revisited* and have been widely adopted in the business world. We added the third context to highlight another important distinction in our daily lives.

IN THE BUSINESS

The first context is *in the business*. This is where you do the more routine parts of your work. Think of it like the kitchen of a house. Most of what you do in a kitchen is preparation for something else. That includes eating, of course. But it's also where you might have family discussions, do homework, or tinker with a repair project. These activities are not the main point of your life, but they're vital for keeping you and your household running. And most of what you do when working "in" the business is the background work that keeps your business running.

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That includes things like attending meetings, or responding to email, or proofreading a report. All are normal business activities. However, much of that activity doesn't directly advance the mission of your company. Sure, everyone needs to check messages and file expense reports, but that's probably not the work you were hired to do. It's background work. Working *in* the business supports the work that you were hired to do.

Often, we spend a little too much time in this context because it can be easier than doing our real job. For example, tidying your workspace is important for keeping you productive. That's a perfectly acceptable use of your time. But when you spend an hour arranging paper clips, you've drifted into *downhill* work. As the name implies, this is work that is easier and less taxing than the deep work that drives results. Over-formatting spreadsheets, composing lengthy emails, and endlessly scrolling through your newsfeed are all downhill work.

Working *in* the business supports the work that you were hired to do.

Reserve as much of your day as needed for this context, but as little as possible. And eliminate downhill work altogether.

ON THE BUSINESS

The second context is *On the Business*. This is where you should spend most of your time. When you are working On the Business, you're doing the things that actually move the company forward. If you are a business owner or leader, that's strategic planning, developing new products, communicating vision, and opening new markets. Obviously, these are complex activities that entail a number of specific tasks.

Many employees are more narrowly focused on specific work like sales, marketing, or operations. If that's you, you drive results by making sales calls, creating marketing campaigns, or responding to customer inquiries. Whenever you are doing the work you were hired to do, you're working On the Business. That work deserves your best time and energy.

Fielding Slack questions from team members, responding to email, and filing reports are all administrative tasks. But two of them involve communication, the other is clerical. To batch them, you might set aside a half-hour to empty all your inboxes, then turn off notifications and spend the next half hour generating your expense report and your weekly sales report. That keeps your mental energy in the same space for a longer time. And it keeps you using the same apps or programs for several tasks in a row. All of that reduces the cost of task switching.

To batch your tasks, try grouping them by these factors:

- **Context**—in, on, or out of the business
- **Type**—clerical, communication, deep thought, meetings, etc.
- **Energy Use**—high or low
- **Time**—shorter or longer tasks

This will require some experimentation on your part. Remember that the idea is to keep yourself in one headspace for a longer period of time before switching to another. That will improve your focus and your productivity.

HORIZONTAL BATCHING

Most people have a rather consistent energy pattern throughout any given day. Some are highly energetic in the morning, especially early morning. Their energy fades after lunch, tapering to near zero by mid-evening. Others have low energy until mid-morning, then gain momentum throughout the day. They may peak in the late afternoon or early evening. Your pattern may be slightly different.

Whatever the case, you may see that you have periods of high or low energy at about the same times each day. Horizontal batching takes advantage of those peaks and valleys by scheduling the same kinds of activities each day around the same time.

Most people have a rather consistent energy pattern throughout any given day.

If you have higher energy in the morning, you'll probably schedule high-leverage, high-focus work before lunch and tasks requiring less energy in the afternoon. That might mean, for example, scheduling meetings only after lunch. Or you might work from home most mornings to minimize interruptions.

Plot Your Energy Pattern

Begin by plotting your typical energy pattern for each day. First, plot your typical sleep pattern. Shade those hours gray.

Second, indicate the hours when you are most alert and energetic. Shade those hours green. You can lighten or darken the shading to indicate intensity if you like. This will be an estimate based on your typical pattern.

Third, add the hours when you are less focused and energetic. Shade those times yellow. Again, you can vary the shading (or use a different color) to indicate the times when your energy is at its absolute lowest.

Do you see patterns emerging? You may notice your high energy periods as a green band running horizontally across every morning, afternoon, or evening. Or you might see a vertical pattern, with high and low energy alternating throughout the day. Either is fine. Just become aware of when you focus the best so you can plan your days accordingly.

Draw Your Boundaries

Next, draw the boundaries for each of the three contexts in which you are active. If you're using a paper calendar, actually draw lines around each block of time. On an electronic calendar, you can create appointments with yourself for those blocks of time.

Begin with Out of the Business. It's important to draw those lines first so you protect your margin and avoid overwork. Include your Daily Rituals.

That time must be protected also. Mark any times you typically reserve for family activities, worship, or hobbies.

Next, set your targets for working On the Business. Sync this with your high energy periods as much as you can, though you may have to include some lower-energy periods also. Don't worry about conflicts with your existing schedule. We'll deal with that in a moment. For now, add your standing meetings and time-specific tasks wherever they currently exist.

Your Ideal Week will simplify your scheduling problems, cut down on task switching, and yield more time for focused work.

Lined writing area for plotting energy patterns and drawing boundaries.

Then schedule your In the Business time. Do your best to sync them with your energy peaks and valleys. Again, plot any fixed in-the-business responsibilities where they currently are.

This weekly schedule is your ideal. It shows the times you expect to be working in each business context, and it shows the times of day (or days of the week) when you would ideally batch your tasks. Though you won't hit the ideal every week, you'll come closer to it when you have the pattern in mind. To the extent you can follow it, your Ideal Week will simplify your scheduling problems, cut down on task switching, and yield more time for focused work.

The Team Ideal Week

You have probably already discovered that your Ideal Week has some wrinkles. Most of them probably have to do with your relation to the team. Your preferred schedule is often interrupted by standing meetings, fixed appointments, or deadlines over which you have little control. Some of those conflicts are inevitable. But by working together, your team can probably iron out a number of the kinks in your individual schedules and create an Ideal Week that works for all of you, at least most of the time. We suggest that you meet as a team and come to an agreement on your Team Ideal Week. Here are four techniques for synchronizing your Ideal Week.

Set Boundaries on Work

Each of your team members may have different energy patterns. As a result, some may be sending messages and queries very early in the morning. Others may communicate later in the day or even the evening.

To align your expectations as a team, define the hours when you will all be available for work. Having a common boundary on work helps to align the team's expectations for communication and collaboration.

Each of your team members may have different energy patterns.

For our team, standard working hours are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. (We recently changed that from 9-to-5 to ensure adequate rejuvenation time during the pandemic.) Team members may occasionally send Slack messages on workday evenings, especially during busy seasons. But no response is expected except in unusual circumstances. And we strongly discourage weekend work or work-related communication outside of business hours.

Lined writing area for notes on page 67.

When you set boundaries on work time, you gain two key benefits. First, team members have the freedom to disconnect and rejuvenate during their out-of-the-business time. Second, you gain greater engagement during work hours. This is the first step toward synchronizing your team's Ideal Week.

Batch Meetings

Meetings are the most significant point where synchronization is necessary. Scheduling is difficult especially for leaders, who tend to be involved in more of them. When you batch meetings, much of that difficulty is eliminated. If possible, schedule all intra-team meetings on a single day of the week. Try to coordinate your inter-team meetings on that day as well. For example, you might have your team one-on-one meetings on Monday morning, your interdepartmental meetings in the early afternoon, and your own team meeting in the later afternoon. That would fill up nearly a full day in meetings. But it would also synchronize 20 percent of your Ideal Week and free up four full days for more focused work.

Designate a Meeting-Free Day

When you designate one day on which no meetings are held, you synch another 20 percent of your team's Ideal Week. For Michael Hyatt & Co., that day is Wednesday. With very few exceptions, there are no meetings held on Wednesdays. That means no company-wide meetings, no executive meetings, no team meetings, no workgroup meetings, no meetings of any kind. That allows team members to batch whichever tasks they like on that day.

On Wednesdays, our sales associates can spend the entire day making sales calls. Our product team

Creating a meeting-free day is remarkably easy to do and will become embedded in your company's culture almost immediately.

members have one day of the week completely free for writing and production. The accounting team has a full day available for data entry and analysis.

Creating a meeting-free day is remarkably easy to do and will become embedded in your company's culture almost immediately. Your team members will love it, and they'll be highly productive on that day.

Lined writing area for notes on page 69.

3 WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED?

The rubber meets the road with question number three. Perhaps you wanted to complete the project in three months, but it actually took five. Or you intended to launch one new product each quarter, but you launched only two all year. Whatever the outcome is, state it plainly. You need to establish the brutal facts, whatever they may be.

In the planner and the sample in the back of this workbook, this question is signified by the “% complete” column under the question “How far did you get?” You will want to add more detail when assessing a major strategic objective. However, this simplified format is a way of acknowledging that few efforts are a total loss. Often, there was progress made or partial results were achieved. Those are always worth noting and celebrating.

You need to establish the brutal facts, whatever they may be.

4 WHAT WORKED AND WHAT DIDN'T?

This question comes next in the After Action Review, and it's asked directly in the Full Focus Planner. There are a couple of things to note here.

First, it's likely that some of your efforts were on track. For example, you may have succeeded in generating 100 new leads, even if you were not able to convert your target number of 250. Or you may have launched a great product even though your production cost was 10 percent over budget. Begin with the wins.

Second, include a rationale in your answer. For example, go beyond saying, “We ran over on cost” to offer the specific reason that happened. A helpful way to do this is to include the word “because” in your answer. “We ran over on cost because we asked for revisions after approving the design.” Or, “We exceeded our revenue goal because the marketing team reacted immediately to the low response rate to our first offer.” Adding a rationale moves you beyond the facts to the underlying cause.

Third, this portion of the After Action Review will be effective only when team members feel it's safe to be honest with themselves and with the team. When they do, they'll take responsibility for their part in the outcome. And that's the first step toward correcting processes, which is vital for the next iteration. For example, it's far better for a team member to say, “We delivered late because I took too long delivering the prototype,” than to have that pointed

Lined writing area for notes.

SESSION 6

90-Day Success Plan

YOUR NO-FAIL GUIDE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE FULL FOCUS SYSTEM

As we come to the last session of this training, you may realize that you've been here before. You go to a conference or a workshop and get an insight that will really help you or your team succeed. The presenter is passionate and convincing. It sounds like a foolproof way to get past a major roadblock in your business. You can't wait to tell everybody about it.

On your next day in the office, you eagerly share your learning. Everybody gets excited about it, and you dive in with creating a project plan.

The Full Focus System is your solution to the problem of complexity.

The meeting ends on a high. But the next day, your inbox is overflowing with new to-do items. When the staff meeting rolls around, you realize that nobody's had time to make progress on implementation. You all recommit to the process and try again. After that, your project starts and stops itself to death.

The Full Focus System is your solution to the problem of complexity. But your day-to-day operations are so complex that you don't have time to implement it. It's a classic Catch-22.

You need a simple pathway for integrating a great idea into what you're already doing. And the tool for doing that is the 90-Day Success Plan.

Lined writing area for notes or planning.



Turn to **EXERCISE 6** in the back of your workbook to lay out your 90-Day Success Plan.

EXERCISE 1

Roadblock Spotter

INSTRUCTIONS

One of the best things about using a navigation app like Waze or Google Maps is that it marks the obstructions on your route. Once you see them, you can find a way around them. Use this worksheet to identify the major roadblocks your team faces.

Mentally review of the last 3–6 months. What were your major challenges or setbacks? Circle those that apply, or write in some of your own.

Beneath each roadblock, jot one or two words that describe the effect of this roadblock on morale and productivity. For example, you might choose words like frustrating, stressful, or demoralizing.

Keep this worksheet at hand during today's sessions. These are the roadblocks you must remove in order to achieve together. Listen for specific solutions identified in today's training.

CHAOS _____

NEVER-ENDING TO-DO LIST _____

LACK OF ALIGNMENT _____

POOR EXECUTION _____

BUSYNESS _____

PATCHWORK SCHEDULE _____

COMPLEXITY _____

POOR COMMUNICATION _____

PROJECT FUMBLE _____

LACK OF FOCUS _____

COMPLEXITY _____

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES _____

LACK OF TIME _____

OTHER _____

OTHER _____

OTHER _____

EXERCISE 2

The Full Focus Lifeline

INSTRUCTIONS

Using this worksheet, create a sample Full Focus Lifeline for a typical day. It may help to think of a specific day, like tomorrow or next Monday. This exercise will give you confidence in using the Full Focus System each quarter, week, and day. And it will help you explain the Full Focus System to your teammates.

DRAW THE LIFELINE

Now draw a line connecting one (or more) of your Daily Big 3 to one of your Weekly Big 3. From there, continue the line to connect to one of your Quarterly Big 3. Finally, draw the line connecting that Quarterly Big 3 Goal to an Annual Goal.

This is the Full Focus System in action.

If you are not able to connect the line to your Annual or Quarterly Goals, review the selection process again. See if you can align at least one daily action all the way back to your most important priority for the quarter or year.

ANNUAL PLAN

Your team may or may not have an annual plan. If you do have annual goals or strategic objectives, list a few of them here. If you do not, that's okay. Proceed directly to the next item.

QUARTERLY BIG 3 GOALS

If you have annual goals or strategic objectives, choose 1–3 that you might focus on this quarter. If your team has not yet identified strategic objectives, list 2–3 things you would like to accomplish together this quarter.

WEEKLY BIG 3 OBJECTIVES

Review your Quarterly Goals. Also consider the ongoing operational objectives for the week, like major deliverables, significant meetings, or travel. Choose three major objectives for the week.

DAILY BIG 3 TASKS

Review your Weekly Big 3 Objectives. Also consider your operational workload for the day: meetings, deadlines, etc. Choose three tasks that you will accomplish today.

EXERCISE 3

Task Filter

INSTRUCTIONS

Use the following chart to list all your tasks. Then go back and designate which zone they're in for you personally.

TASK	PASSION	PROFICIENCY	ZONE NAME
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
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	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

EXERCISE 4

Team Ideal Week

INSTRUCTIONS

It's time to create your own ideal week. When you're done, compare your ideal week with your team-mates. This will give you a basis for negotiating some elements of a Team Ideal Week, which will give all of you greater alignment and focus.

- STEP 1** Lightly shade the hours when you will be Out of the Business.
- STEP 2** Considering your typical energy pattern, Draw a solid line around the higher-energy times. This will be time best spent working On the Business.
- STEP 3** Draw a dotted line around your lower energy hours, which are best spent working In the Business.
- STEP 4** Add any standing meetings or time-specific commitments. (These may not yet align with your ideal contexts.) Also add any batches of tasks that you would like to incorporate.
- STEP 5** List items that are not yet in sync with your ideal. (For example, meetings that occur at inconvenient times.)

- STEP 6** Consider how your team might implement the following:
 - Workday Boundaries _____
 - Batched Meetings _____
 - Meeting-Free Days _____
 - Team Communication Standards _____

EXERCISE 5

After-Action Review

INSTRUCTIONS AND EXAMPLE

Reflect on the last initiative your team completed. With that in mind, complete this After-Action Review. Be sure to focus on your part in the initiative. That should always precede analyzing the contributions of others.

PROJECT NAME: Fall Product Launch **DATE:** November 30, 2020

What were our major wins (during this period of time)?

Had a successful, morale building all-teams meeting.

Created an online course for launch in January.

Onboarded new associate.

What did we intend to accomplish?

Achieve sales of \$235,000 during the initial launch period.

Achieve the sale of 1,000 units.

Enroll 50 first-time buyers.

What did we actually accomplish?

Achieved sales of \$199,750.

Sold 743 units.

Enrolled 52 first-time buyers.

What worked and what didn't?

Campaign to existing customers did not perform as expected because our list was cold.

Unit sales were lower than expected because our subscription offer was priced too high.

New customer enrollment was slightly over goal because of successful launch videos.

What will we keep, improve, start, or stop?

Keep producing brief videos for release on social media aimed at first-time users.

Keep offering an annual subscription to lock-in unit sales. Improve our subscription offer by offering a larger discount on the first order.

PROJECT NAME:

DATE:

What were our major wins (during this period of time)?

What did we intend to accomplish?

What did we actually accomplish?

What worked and what didn't?

What will we keep, improve, start, or stop?

EXERCISE 6

90-Day Success Plan

INSTRUCTIONS

In this session, you will create your 90-Day Success Plan for implementing the Full Focus System as a team. As we move through the four steps, think on two levels. First, think on the individual level. Each of you has your own work to do. So think about how this applies to you as an individual teammate. Mark those items with an S for “self.” You’re also a member of a team, or you may be a team leader. So think about what insights and actions your team might take together. Mark those insights with a T for “team.”

STEP 1 / STATE YOUR CURRENT REALITY

What are some of the challenges, questions, or areas of friction you’re facing right now in your business? Start with your findings from the Roadblock Spotter worksheet. List other problems or roadblocks that have occurred to you throughout the day.

PRIORITY	ROADBLOCK	S / T
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

STEP 2 / CLARIFY YOUR LEARNING

Look over your notes from today’s intensive—including the content, individual activities, and group discussions. List your insights, breakthroughs, or other important information here. What were your aha moments today?

STEP 3 / CONNECT TO YOUR BUSINESS

Based on these insights or breakthroughs, what changes will you make to remove your roadblocks to team achievement?

What do we stand to gain from taking these actions? What’s the win?

What is at stake if we don’t take action and nothing changes? What will we lose?

GOAL DETAIL

GOAL SUMMARY / Write your SMARTER goal.

ACHIEVEMENT GOAL HABIT GOAL

Domain SPIRITUAL INTELLECTUAL EMOTIONAL PHYSICAL MARITAL
 PARENTAL SOCIAL VOCATIONAL AVOCATIONAL FINANCIAL

KEY MOTIVATIONS / Write then rank your key motivations.

NEXT STEPS / List the first few actions you need to take to reach your goal.

YOUR REWARD / Decide how you will celebrate once you achieve your goal.

STREAKTRACKER™ / Check off your progress as you go (helpful for habit goals).

M1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
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M1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
M2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
M3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

GOAL DETAIL

WEEKLY PREVIEW

STEP 1 MY BIGGEST WINS / List 3-5 major accomplishments from the past week.

STEP 2 AFTER ACTION REVIEW / Refer to your last Weekly Big 3

How far did you get?

%
COMPLETE

What worked? What didn't?

What will you keep, improve, start, or stop doing?

STEP 3 LIST SWEEP / Process action items and consider next steps.

- DEFERRED TASKS Add any Big 3 or Other Tasks you didn't complete to your task manager.
- DELEGATED TASK Add unassigned tasks or desired status updates to your task manager.
- DAILY NOTES Add any assignments or action items to your task manager.
- GOALS Review your annual and/or quarterly goals.

STEP 4 WEEKLY OVERVIEW / List important events, deadlines, and tasks in the coming week.

Use weekly view on the next page if helpful.

PERSONAL _____

PROFESSIONAL _____

MONDAY	
TUESDAY	
WEDNESDAY	
THURSDAY	
FRIDAY	
SATURDAY	SUNDAY

STEP 5 WEEKLY BIG 3 / List three objectives to advance your goals and projects this week.

STEP 6 SELF-CARE PLANNER / Brainstorm below, then schedule your rejuvenation on the Daily Pages.

SLEEP _____

EAT _____

MOVE _____

CONNECT _____

RELAX _____
