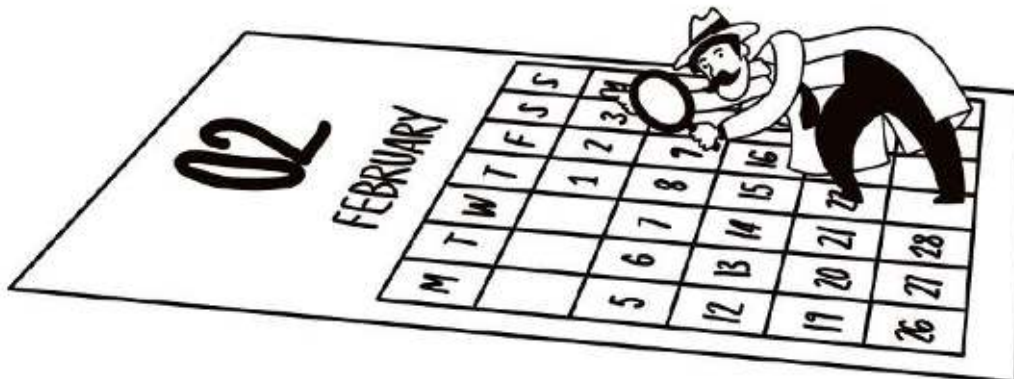


INTERROGATE YOUR CALENDAR CHEAT SHEET

From Chapter 6 of
Winning The Week: How To Plan A Successful Week, Every Week



In this step of The Winning The Week Method, your job is to **interrogate every hour of your upcoming 14 days**. Like a lawyer seeking the truth from a reluctant witness, your calendar isn't just going to show you the information you're seeking. You have to sweat it out of it!

Ask yourself these questions:

1. What shouldn't be on your calendar but is?

Decline and erase these events, so they don't clutter your calendar.

2. What should be on your calendar but isn't?

If it's a "hard-edged" commitment (meaning you have to be at a specific place at a particular time—even via video conference), then make sure that you block off all of the time it will take.

3. How much "flex time" will you need to deal with emergencies this week?

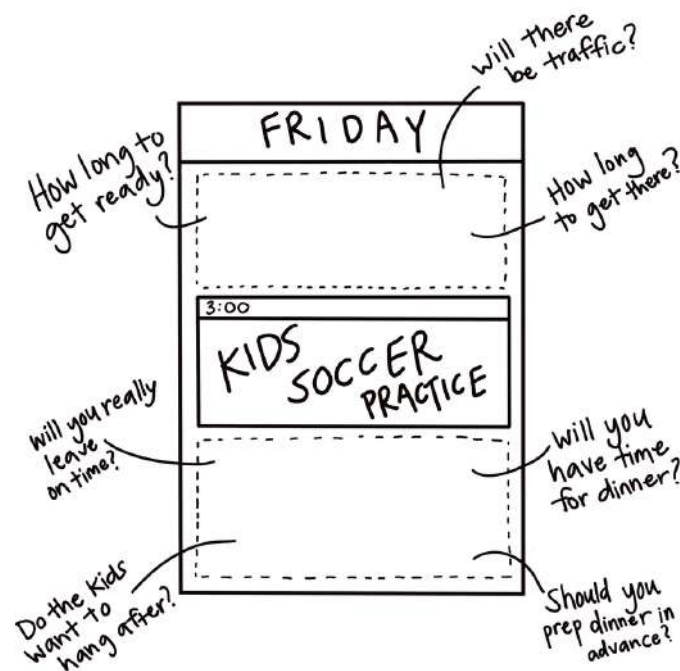
Unexpected emergencies happen to all of us in one way or another, so the intelligent move is to preemptively block off big chunks of time in your calendar to deal with unforeseen issues that are bound to come up.

4. What could be arranged more optimally in your calendar?

For example, if you need to do several chores around town, why not do them all on the same day instead of scattering them throughout your week?

5. When (exactly) will your leveraged priority get done?

Go ahead and estimate the amount of time it will take to get your number one priority done this week. Then add some buffer to that estimate. Now schedule that time directly into your calendar, ideally on Monday or Tuesday (when your energy and attention are at their peak).



6. Where are the landmines in my calendar?

I recommend you take a “mental walk” through every part of every day in your coming week, asking yourself where the landmines might be hiding. For each landmine, decide on a plan to diffuse that situation before it happens.

7. Did my calendar review unearth some hidden tasks?

Write them down and save them on the side.

LIVE-OR-DIE TASK TRIAGE CHEAT SHEET

*From Chapter 7 of
Winning The Week: How To Plan A Successful Week, Every Week*



WHY TRIAGE?

There's the analogy: Your tasks are your patients, all begging for your skills and time to help them. And you're the doctor, deciding how to triage those tasks so that you can do the most good with your fixed resources. You know you can't get all these tasks done, as much as you might want to. You need a criteria similar to the triage system so that you can justify these tough choices to yourself and the people around you.

Here are your criteria:

- Your primary objective is to accomplish your number one leveraged priority because that creates the most value for everyone and makes your life easier over time.
- Secondly, you want to tackle your other essential tasks in a way that balances urgency with impactfulness.

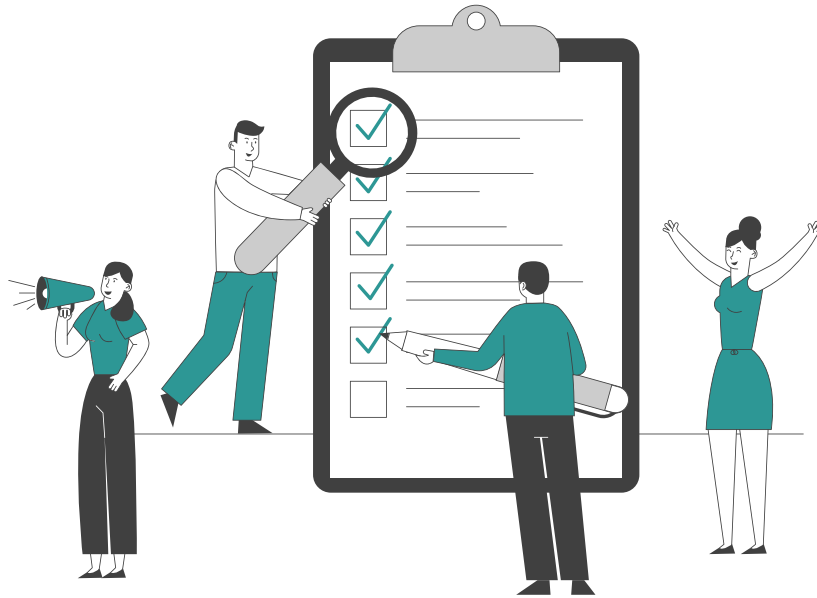
The first step is to make sure you have a full and complete to-do list. Break down your leveraged priority into its supporting sub-tasks and add them to your to-do list.

Next, scan your projects and ongoing responsibilities and think about the tasks you need to do to keep them moving forward.

And finally, write down any “brain flies” that have been annoying you — things that you've been meaning to do, but keep forgetting about. They all go on your list.

Now, it's time to triage your list.

Ruthlessly triaging your task list in five minutes using this decision tree will help you decide if a task should get done this week, has to wait, or dies altogether.



1. IS IT RELATED TO YOUR NUMBER ONE LEVERAGED WEEKLY PRIORITY?

✓ If yes, it should stay on your to-do list! Brainstorm all possible subtasks and dependencies, including tasks that other people have to do.

➔ If no, move on to the next question.

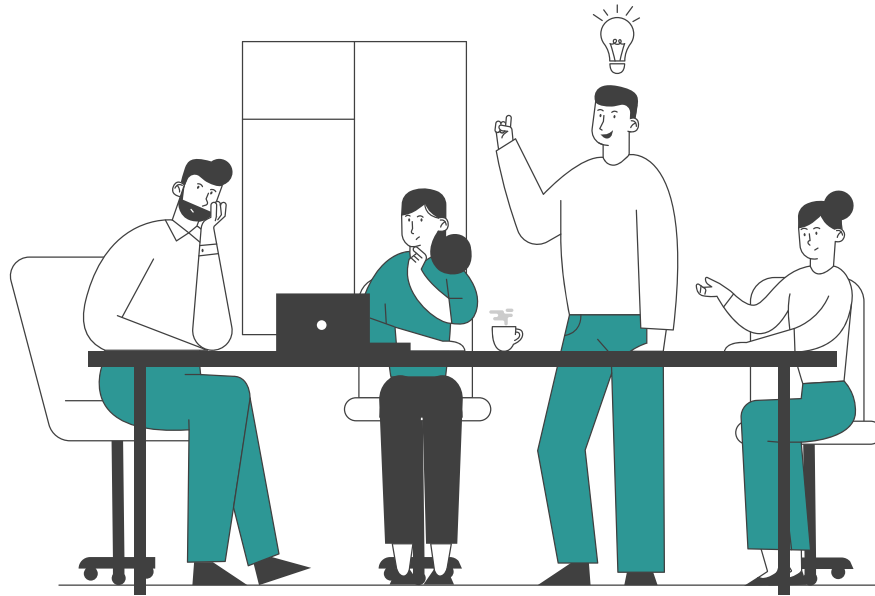
2. **IS IT INCREDIBLY TIME-SENSITIVE?**

You likely have tasks that **have to get done** or you risk getting fired or losing business. As long as you've already put your key priority first, you can also keep these urgent tasks on your list.

✓ If yes, keep it on your task list. Ask yourself **what could be sacrificed to make room** for this urgent but unimportant task.

➔ If no, move on to the next question.





3. CAN THIS TASK BE TACO'D?

Invariably, you'll find that you have more tasks than anyone could do, even if they worked around the clock. I have a fun acronym, TACO, that can help you cut down the size of your to-do list as you're processing it. It stands for Terminate, Automate, Consolidate, and Outsource. Here's how to use it:

Start by asking yourself “*does this task truly need to be done, or can it be Terminated?*”

You'd be shocked at how many tasks you'll find on your lists that are either already complete or that don't need to happen at all. Delete these tasks off your list. Now I get how absurd this can sound. My client Rahul laughed when I suggested that he could terminate tasks altogether. But after ten minutes of brainstorming, he suddenly came up with a great example:

“Well, I’ve been the PTA president at my kid’s school for four years in a row. Maybe it’s time to let someone else take the reins. I spend hundreds of hours a year in that role!”

Later that day, Rahul took thirty minutes to write a polite resignation email and freed up hundreds of hours in one fell swoop. That was an epic example of “terminate.”

Can this task be Automated? Can I make this task faster using technology?

Sometimes we overlook the fact that there could be a way to do all or part of a task using software instead of doing it yourself. There are so many new programs that make things easier to do these days. One of my favorites is Zapier, which helps two otherwise separate softwares speak to each other. In my case, it automatically creates a new row in a Google Sheet whenever someone books a meeting with me using my scheduling link. This way, my team can easily calculate the total appointments booked that month, by whom, and for what purpose.

So ask yourself: is there a technology you can use to automate all or part of a task?

Can this task be Consolidated? Could I achieve better efficiency by doing this task alongside similar work at the same time?

Consolidation means grouping similar tasks together on your calendar so that you can optimize your brain energy. The more task-switching you do, the less productive you are, so this strategy can really boost your productivity. If you see an opportunity for consolidation, go ahead and group those tasks together on your list.

Another example of consolidation is calls and meetings. If you're already spending most of your day in calls and meetings, it's efficient to go ahead and schedule more calls and meetings for that day. Let's be honest, you weren't going to get great work done on that day anyway, so why not pull more meetings into that day and get them done with?

Can this task be Outsourced? Could this task be delegated to someone else?

Ask yourself: what would need to happen to move this task to another person? Maybe you'd need to write a set of instructions or provide a decision tree to explain how to accomplish a task. Or (my favorite): film a video or a screencast showing someone exactly how you do it right, then send that to them as a set of instructions.

✓ If you can terminate, automate, consolidate, or outsource the task, then go ahead and do so now.

➔ If not, move on to the next question.



4. IS IT A SOMEDAY TASK?

If this task doesn't have a specific due date in the next month, it's likely a **Someday Task**. You know it's a Someday Task if it's **not related to your key priority**, yet there are no specific timelines or consequences to not doing it this week (other than you being disappointed). These tasks muddy up the water and make it harder to see the crucial tasks. **So get them off your list!**

✓ If it's a Someday Task, move it to your Someday List and off your to-do list. Review your Someday Tasks on a monthly basis to see if any of them deserve to make it back onto your main to-do list.

➔ If not, move on to the next question.

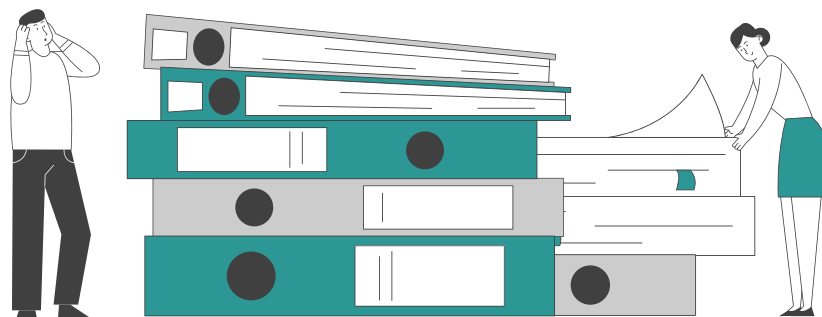
5. DO YOU NEED MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE TASK TO MAKE IT ACTIONABLE?

If the task has made it this far without being classified, it might require **additional information**. There may be things that you need to clarify, or you may need to have someone explain its priority relative to other projects.

Let's say your boss has asked you to help sell an important new client. But, as you think about this task, you realize that you need more clarity to execute it. For example, what deliverables does your boss want to see? A pitch deck, a well-crafted email, or simply your attendance at a meeting? And by when—what is the timeline for this task? Also, would this task be done before or after other seemingly time-sensitive tasks? Without understanding this, it's hard to triage appropriately.

Remember, *it's ok to send it back and ask for more information!*

✓ If you realize you need more clarity, kick it back to the sender asking for more information.



The background features a collage of various 'no' related graphics in light teal. It includes speech bubbles with 'NOPE', 'NO!', and 'no', a hand holding a 'No!' sign, a thumbs-down icon, and the word 'no' in different fonts and styles. There are also 'x' marks and a large 'NO!' sign.

HOW TO SAY NO TO THE TOP 7 TIME SUCKS

Ever feel like you don't have enough hours in the day?

Ever thought to yourself, *"Holy moly, it's 5pm already and I haven't even made a DENT in my to-do list!"*

And right then, someone comes by your desk and asks *"Hey, you got a minute?"*

Yeah. We've all been there.

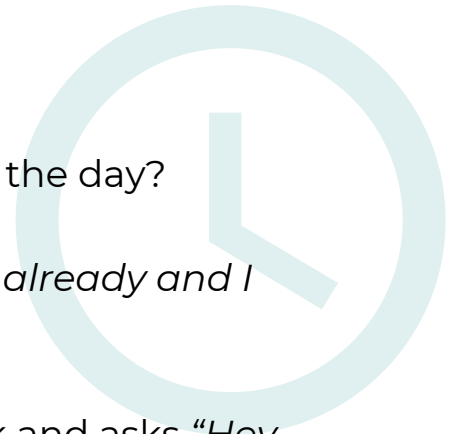
The problem is, how can you say "no" to some of the obligations in your life so you can free up space? How can you say "no" to your coworkers, your friends, and your family members who all want a piece of your time, leaving you with none?

Won't people hate you for it? Won't they be disappointed in you, and think you're a horrible person for telling them "no"?

That's why we created this cheat sheet, which is your guide to navigating these treacherous waters of negative emotions.

At Lifehack Method, we teach our clients how to truly DEFEND their time like their most precious resource - because it's the only thing in our lives that we can't ever create more of.

Here's our Cheat Sheet on how you can say NO to the top time sucks in your life. It's time to bust out of these chains and get some time back for yourself.



1. SAY NO TO MEETINGS



To a project manager or coworker:

“Hey [meeting organizer], I love this project and while I would love to be a part of this meeting, my schedule is completely booked up this week. Can you send me the notes and my follow ups afterwards?”

**hack: ask if one of the attendees can lay down an iphone can record a voice memo of the call for you*

“Hey [meeting organizer], since I’m not a crucial attendee in this status update meeting, I’m going to sit it out. I will send you my updates beforehand and read the notes afterwards.”

To your boss:

“Hey [boss], I’m really focused on driving [insert key business priority] down the field and this meeting isn’t essential for me to participate in. If it’s okay with you, I’ll use this time to get you those reports you wanted ahead of schedule”

“Hey [boss], our meeting this week is set to be in person, but all our agenda items can be handled with a short phone call. I’m sure you would appreciate having the extra time back in your schedule. I’ll re-send the calendar invite with conference call information if that’s okay with you”

To a client:

“Hey [client], our meeting this week is set to be in-person, but all our agenda items can be finalized via email. I’m going to cancel the meeting unless there are additional items you want to discuss, and instead send you an email you can take action on immediately”

“Hey [client], I’d like to change our meeting this week to a quick and powerful 15 min phone debrief. I’m sure you would appreciate the time back on your schedule and we will still have plenty of time to update you on our incredible progress so far.”

Other ways to get your way:

“I have back-to-back meetings today, so unfortunately the only way I can meet in person is if it’s here at my office. I’m sorry about that! Let me know if you can make it, or if you’d prefer to make it a phone conversation.”

If you can’t get out of it: Consolidate all your calls onto one or two days of the week, back-to-back, to minimize your task switching. This is great for salespeople and coaches who have a lot of 1:1 calls.

Best case scenario: no meeting/email/phone call...

Worst case scenario: Across-town meeting!

2. SAY NO TO TALKING TO PEOPLE



Are you someone who spends waaay too much time chatting on the phone, or indulging co-workers requests for your time? Here's how to say "no" to these distractions.

To a coworker:

"Hey [coworker], I'm right in the middle of something, give me 15 minutes. I'll swing by your desk when I can give you my full attention."

To a friend/loved one:

"Hey [friend], I do have 5 minutes now but then I have to run to a meeting. Is that enough time to talk, or should we schedule some time to chat later?"

To your boss:

"Hey [boss], this has been super helpful, thanks for the direction. I'm going to get on top of these next steps and come back to you when I'm finished."

[After boss calls you asking you to come by right now] *"Hey [boss], can I swing by your office in a bit? I want to finalize this report for you to make sure it gets done on time. Why don't I come by after your meeting with the VP?"*

3. SAY NO TO PHONE CALLS



“Hey [name], listen, I really want to catch up with you but now’s not a great time. I’m running around with so much to do - I know you can relate! Can I call you back? Or, can you email me exactly what you need and I’ll take a look tonight?”

“Hey [name], what’s up? I’m so happy to hear from you! Hey before we get into a conversation, I want to warn you that I only have 5 minutes before running to a meeting. Is that enough time? Or should I call you back later?”

[Via text message] “Hey [name], I got your message, thanks so much for the call. I will send you an email with my thoughts when I have a chance in the next few days!”

“Hey [name], I’m so sorry, but I really don’t have time right now to give this my full attention. Can we schedule a meeting specifically about this next week? In the meantime, feel free to email me a summary of what you’d like to discuss and I will take a look.”

*Hack: change your voicemail message to advise your caller on the best way to reach you. Mine says *“the best way to reach me is by text message or email.”*

*For the most brave amongst us, consider getting rid of your phone number completely and revel in the extra time free of rings and dings.

4. SAY NO TO SOCIAL MEDIA /THE NEWS



To friends/family:

“Hey guys, I have a new personal policy that I’m not going to be on social media except for once every few days. If you want to reach me then text message is the best way!”

To yourself:

“I’m allowed to check Facebook after I get my #1 priority done today. It’s my new reward! Plus, there’s no news in the world that can’t wait for a few hours before I find out about it”

*Hack: download Facebook NewsFeed Eradicator to keep you on track when you start to drift. It replaces your newsfeed with an inspirational productivity quote.

“Oh here’s an interesting article I really want to read. I’m going to save it to Pocket to read it on my next break, or over lunch, after I crank out an incredible morning of work.”

*If you’re even more daring, delete the Facebook app from your phone entirely, and enjoy the strange feeling of having nothing to check on your phone. Look, there’s a whole unexplored world around you!

5. SAY NO TO COOL NEW PROJECTS



This is such a tough one - because I know that saying “no” to new projects can be so hard! We all have what’s known as “Shiny Object Syndrome” where we can get pulled off track by new, cool ideas and business opportunities. Here’s how to politely decline or say “not now” when you know this new thing will be a distraction to your core objective.

“Hey [name], this project is so incredible and I’m flattered that you thought of me to get involved with it! Unfortunately I don’t have the resources to get involved right now, however I would love to stay in contact and keep updated on how it progresses.”

“Hey [name], what a cool idea! As much as I would love to run the ball myself, I wouldn’t be able to give it the proper attention right now. My [core objective] is my priority and is pulling much of my focus. However I can introduce you to some people who might be great to help out with this!”

“Hey [name], that is such a great idea for our business and I love this suggestion. I’m going to make a note to revisit it next year, once our core business is taking care of itself and we have the resources to execute on this idea. Thanks again for the suggestion!”

6. SAY NO TO SOCIAL ENGAGEMENTS



Lunches, dinners, birthday parties, baby showers, housewarming parties and networking events can be super fun, but they can also waste a ton of your time. Here's how to decline without sounding like a jerk.

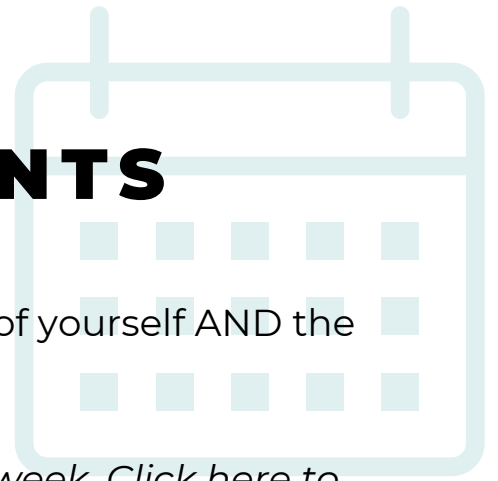
"Hey [name], thanks for this invite! I have a previous engagement that night, but would love to hear how it goes and if I can add value either before or after the event."

"Hey [name], I am so bummed that I will be missing out on this! I'll be sending you a special birthday present in lieu of my presence."

*Hack: use Fiverr.com for really creative presents. I've had custom jingles made, special cocktail napkins/housewarming gifts made, and even received a phone call from someone with the voice of Christopher Walken.

"Hey [name], I'm sorry, but I have a personal policy that I don't take lunch or dinner meetings because if I schedule with one person then I feel like I have to schedule them with everyone. Can we schedule a phone call instead?"

7. SAY NO TO SCHEDULING EVENTS



Get that time back in your life - for the sake of yourself AND the person you're scheduling with!

"Hey [name], yes I do have availability next week. Click here to view my full schedule and pick a time that works for you."

*Hack: create an account on www.calendly.com for free scheduling software that connects to your calendar. It's incredible.

"Hey [name], my assistant (cc'd) will find a time that works for both of us. Amy, can you help us out please?"

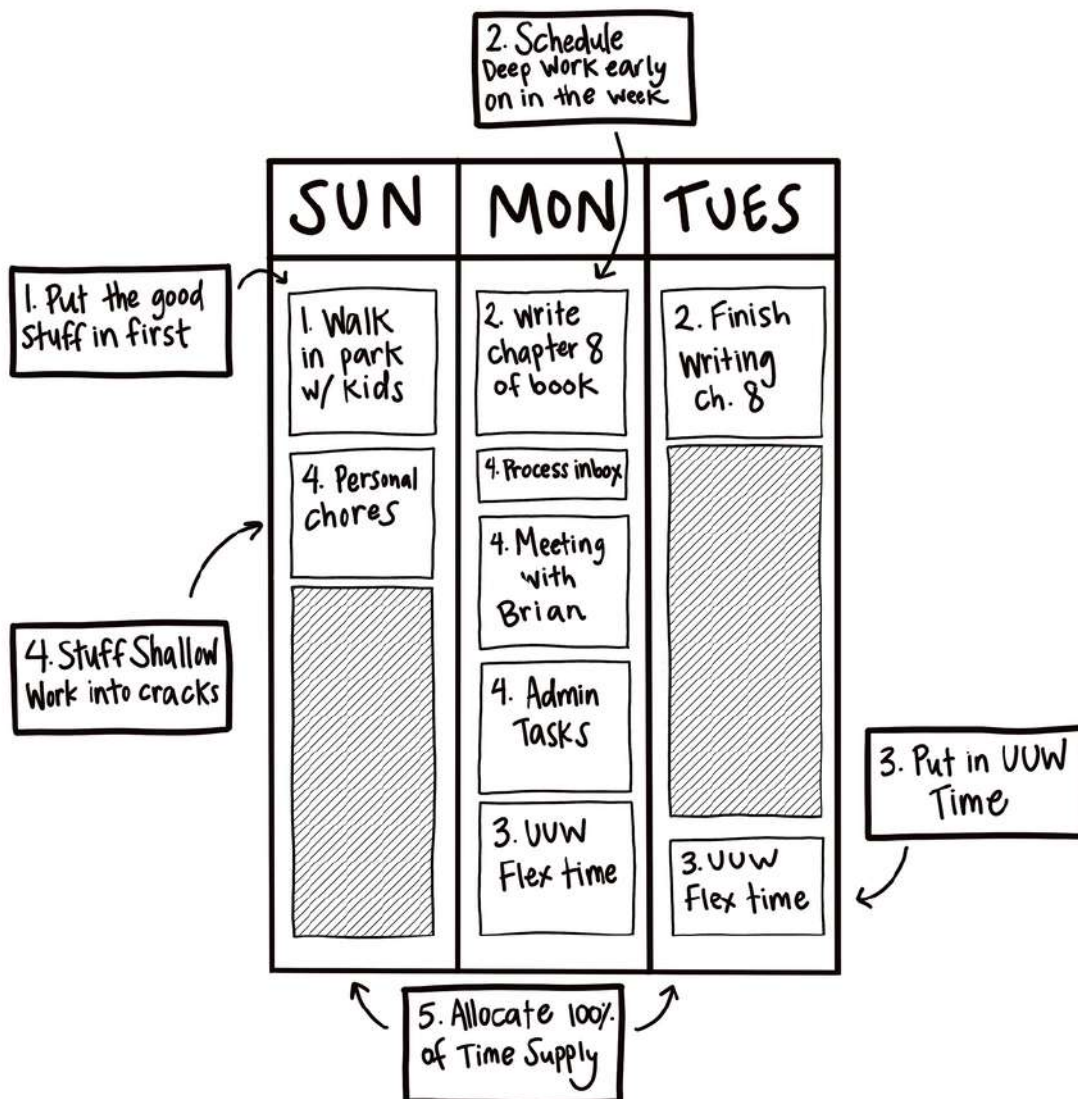
*Hack: get a piece of tech called x.ai that will ACT like a real person and help you schedule calls. Her name is "Amy" and she (or he, if you'd prefer Andrew) will plug right into your email and ping pong back and forth for you until something gets scheduled.

IN SUMMARY:

1. Create a "personal policy" against certain commitments
2. Time box your commitments (ie "I have 5 minutes, is that enough time?")
3. Say "not now" instead of "no"
4. Say "thanks for thinking of me, but my [friend's name] would be far better for this"
5. Communicate expectations ahead of time
6. Remember that in order to say "yes" to one thing, we also have to say "no" to 100 others
7. What's an hour of your time worth? If your commitment is not worth that amount of money to it, it's time to say "no."

THE LIFEHACK CALENDARIZING PROCESS

From Chapter 8 of
Winning The Week: How To Plan A Successful Week, Every Week



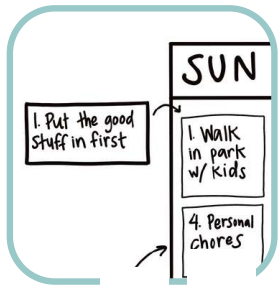


A simple but profound principle of Winning The Week is that *when you say you're going to get something done, you also block out a specific time to do it.*

This step is called "*calendarizing*" your to-do list, and it's the last (and most crucial) step of The Winning The Week Method. Calendarizing is when you take something from your to-do list and block out dedicated time on your calendar to get it done. When you've filled up all the time slots on your calendar, **you officially have a plan!**

Ideally, you should account for *all 168 hours* of your week in this step. That includes the time you spend sleeping, eating, showering, and commuting too! This is what it means to have **extreme ownership** over your time.

Open your calendar of choice (we use Google Calendar) and *your to-do list* (we use Asana), and let's get started.

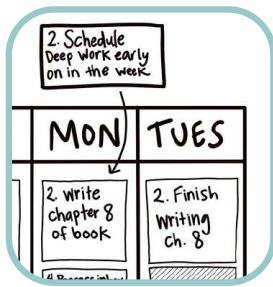


STEP 1: PUT THE GOOD STUFF IN FIRST

Start by scheduling in the "*good stuff*": the things that make life enjoyable. This is necessary because in our workaholic society, we push the good stuff off to the end, and it never happens. That's how we end up with "all work and no play" lifestyles. Winning The Week is not just about winning at work—it's about **winning the whole enchilada of life.**

Here are some categories of activities you might consider slotting in first:

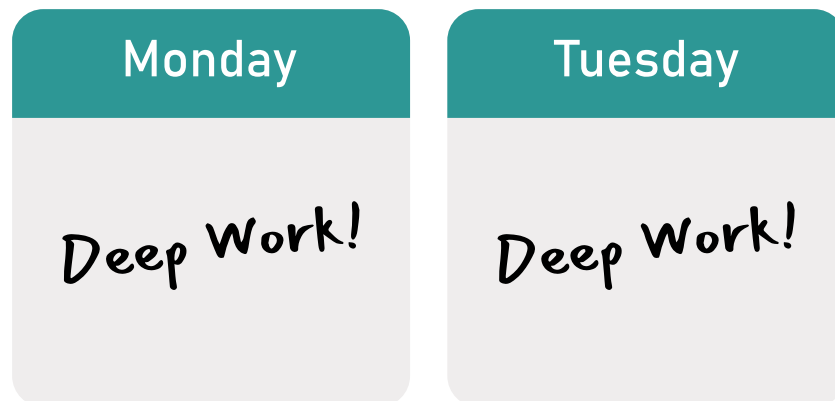
- **Self-care:** going to the gym, jogging, getting a massage, or getting a haircut.
- **Play time:** Hobbies, gaming, going to a movie, or dance lessons.
- **Social time:** Hanging out with the people who matter to you, like friends, family, or work colleagues.
- **Quiet time:** Setting aside time to take a walk through nature or sit on the couch and listen to an entire album (one of my personal favorites).
- **Creative time:** Time to write, paint, draw, or otherwise exercise your creativity.
- **Significant other time:** Especially when you have kids, quality time with a partner seems to evaporate—unless it's in the calendar.

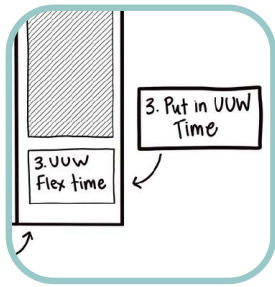


STEP 2: SCHEDULE YOUR DEEP WORK

Deep Work is any work related to your number one leveraged priority that you set earlier in your planning session. Once you've estimated how much time you think your Deep Work will take, add at least a 30% buffer onto that.

I recommend scheduling it on Monday or Tuesday, at a time of day when your energy is the *highest* (for most people, that is the morning).





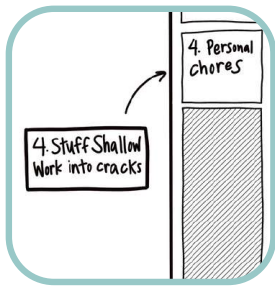
STEP 3: PUT IN UUW TIME

UUW stands for **Unplanned, Unwanted Work**. It's work that will hit your plate, but you don't yet know what it is.

UUW time is a placeholder that you put into your calendar to deal with these issues as they come up. It's flex time you know you'll need, but you don't yet know precisely what you'll need it for (yet).

Start by putting in one hour a day, sometime after 2 pm. It's also wise to schedule your UUW towards the end of the week. Some of our clients reserve all day Friday for UUW that builds up throughout the week.



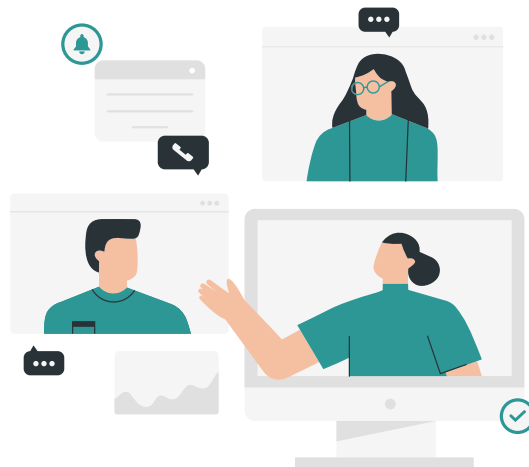


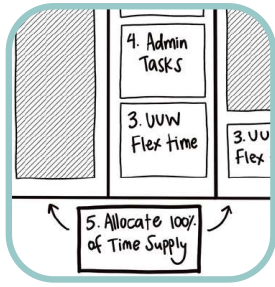
STEP 4: STUFF SHALLOW WORK INTO THE CRACKS

Schedule your shallow work tasks (basically, anything that isn't your deep work) in the gaps in your schedule. For example, a thirty-minute block of time between two meetings is perfect for shallow work.

Since you've scheduled your important work early in the week and early in the day, your shallow work will tend to fall later in the day or later in the week when your energy is lower. That's perfect since these tasks don't require your best energy to accomplish.

Meetings are nearly always shallow work, so schedule them as such: later in the day and later in the week. If you can reschedule any meetings to open up time for deep work, do that now.





STEP 5: KEEP GOING UNTIL ALL OF YOUR TIME SUPPLY HAS BEEN ALLOCATED

If you don't like what you see, feel free to start over and keep "balancing the scales" until you've got a winning plan. Negotiate with yourself and decide what gets to stay in the plan and what needs to go.

This means you get to:

- **Get creative**—are there ways you can think outside of the box to meet your needs and those of the people around you?
- **Negotiate powerfully**—are there deadlines you can renegotiate on shallow work tasks, or appointments that can get rescheduled?
- **Accept reality**—look at your life with zero wishful thinking. Be able to see when a timeline isn't realistic and accept that reality without getting emotional. Accepting life on life's terms is a rare (but valuable) skill.

- **Push tasks into next week and even next month**—if a task didn't make the cut in this week's calendar, reschedule it for a later date without anguish.
- **Communicate this newfound reality to others**—if you've made changes that impact your coworkers, family, or clients, then now is the time to inform them (especially if it's inconvenient or bad news). It's hard to disappoint people and have hard conversations, but it's much better to do it in advance than at the last minute.
- **Check your perfectionism**—ask yourself what "good enough" looks like and where you can accept a lower level of quality to serve the greater good.

This all takes practice to master, but works powerfully even for first-timers. You'll quickly find that you develop a feel for how to calendarize a week that works for you.

REPLANNING CHEAT SHEET

From Chapter 9 of
Winning The Week: How To Plan A Successful Week, Every Week

"We cannot
direct the
wind, but
we can
adjust
the sails."
- unknown



WHAT TO DO DAILY

Take 15 minutes at the start of each day (or at the end of the day if you prefer) to do a review of how reality has shifted since you set the course.

- Evaluate your progress to your number one priority. Are you on pace to finish that priority by the end of the week? If not, what needs to happen to get you back on track?
- If you got blown off course in a significant way, what has to be sacrificed, traded, or adjusted to get back on course?

Take swift action to shift around work blocks, reprioritize, and push some tasks into the following week. Feel free to cancel or reschedule appointments in light of these changing circumstances, and defer shallow work to preserve your deep work time. Remember, this is why you scheduled U UW time into your week—so use it! This gives you essential flexibility when the unexpected happens.



WHAT TO DO THROUGHOUT THE DAY

You can take actions throughout the day to combat the effects of U UW (unwanted, unplanned work). Here's what to do when you get blown off course:

1. Does the U UW have to do with your top priority?

If so, welcome the opportunity to move that priority forward! Even if it adds time and work to your plate, it's still getting you towards your big goal. So lean into it!

2. Is there a negative consequence if you don't get it done right away?

And by the way, the consequence of someone being disappointed doesn't cut it. I'm talking about real consequences, like losing a client or missing a huge opportunity. If there's no real consequence, then delay as long as possible.

If there is an unacceptable consequence (like a client threatening to leave), remember to use your U UW time to tackle this. And be sure you're not using "first-tier energy" to tackle it. First tier energy means those precious hours when you can do your best work. If it's shallow work, push it to the end of the day and use "second-tier energy" to deal with it.

3. Negotiate to push the deadline out as far as possible.

Push hard! Bring the other party's awareness to the fact that their last-minute request is hurting your plans. That will train them to pause and think from your perspective the next time they have this kind of request. Otherwise, you're training them to drop grenades in your lap! This is an opportunity to change the incentives of the people around you.

4. Force yourself to use all the time you're given.

Do not complete tasks earlier than expected. It's easy to think to yourself, "well, this feels so important, and people are breathing down my neck; I might as well get it done now." But the opposite is true! If you answer emails right away, you're training people to expect an instant response every time. When you complete tasks days ahead of schedule, you're creating a new baseline that becomes an expectation. Besides, when people realize they can't get their way instantly, they tend to help themselves more.



4 LAYERS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

From Chapter 12 of
Winning The Week: How To Plan A Successful Week, Every Week

The Four Layers of Accountability



Think about a time when you accomplished something extraordinary in your life—a time when you amazed yourself and exceeded what you thought was possible. You probably had two or more of these layers in your life, reinforcing your willpower and preventing you from wiggling out.

As you look to win your week, I want you to **layer accountability into your life** to amplify your discipline and motivation. While you don't need all four layers to achieve results, I encourage you to build in as many as possible. Like a fabric, **more layers make for stronger, more durable accountability.**



THE BAR RAISER

The first layer of accountability is a *Bar Raiser*. This is a person who sets the bar high for you; much higher than you would set it yourself. Together with you, they create a space of **elevated expectations**. They often take the form of a **coach**, a **boss**, a **teacher**, a **mentor**, or a **leader**—someone close enough to you to see your potential and really care, but far enough to have a balanced perspective. That distance also allows us to accept their **honest feedback** in a way we never could with someone very close to us. In your moments of doubt (when other people might quit), your Bar Raiser tells you to keep going and assures you that the voices of doubt in your head are wrong.

This trusting dynamic plays out over time as a loop:

- You **doubt yourself** and think about quitting.
- Your Bar Raiser intervenes to **bridge you past self-doubt**.
- You **succeed** and are **thrilled** by the result.
- You **trust** your Bar Raiser even more and become willing to take **bigger risks** with them.
- Over time you **internalize** the voice of your Bar Raiser.



THE BUDDY

The second layer of accountability is a **buddy**. Broadly defined, this is a dyad, or a small group of **just two people**. Buddies are one of the most fundamentally misunderstood types of accountability. Buddy relationships often fail because they use their buddy check-ins as *bad therapy sessions*, complaining to each other and justifying each other's excuses. Sadly, this is why a buddy relationship done wrong can hurt far more than it helps.

A successful form of buddy relationship is a "**mirror buddy**." A mirror buddy helps you **strip away the emotion** and see yourself through another person's eyes. When you report your progress to your buddy, they act as a mirror to reflect what you're saying back to you. That gives you a space to externalize your thoughts and see your life through a neutral lens. Ideally, your buddy **doesn't inject any emotion or opinion** into the dialogue—they simply repeat back to you what they're hearing and seeing.

The number one mistake people make in a buddy dynamic is **overcomplicating** it. People try to be cheerleaders for their buddies, injecting forced positivity into the dynamic. Or they try to be coaches, injecting judgments and advice. Or worse, they cosign on their buddies' excuses, giving them tacit permission to underperform.

You can find a great buddy by reaching out to your **professional network** or any community where you're an established member. In my Lifehack Tribe membership community, we host a monthly event called *Accountability Buddy Speed Dating*. It's essentially a networking event where members of the Lifehack Tribe can quickly meet dozens of potential buddies all at once. But even if you're not part of a group that makes it frictionless to find a buddy, I guarantee that there's someone in your network who would be thrilled by the idea of having you as an accountability buddy.



THE TEAM

The third layer is a **team of people you respect**. These are like-minded individuals in the same boat as you are, pushing towards similar goals. They are preferably **at your level or higher** in whatever game you're playing, because team accountability works best when you respect the people around you. That means that when they offer you support or feedback, it means something to you because **you value their opinion highly**.

But the best part of being on a team is the **competition!** If you're reading this book, the chances are that you're a highly competitive person. Groups effortlessly amplify that competitive instinct. This friendly competition is extremely helpful in getting you to take action when you have **fear** or **resistance** because competition can mask or outweigh fear.

Teams help us **stop feeling sorry for ourselves** and get in the game. Friendly competition is good, and there is enormous power if you can leverage it in the right way. You'll find an endless supply of motivation and discipline when you're on a team that pushes you.



PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

The fourth layer is **public accountability**. Public accountability is when you have **committed to a result *publicly***, and you know that you will be **held accountable** in a public forum.

Sadly, most people lack opportunities for public accountability in their day-to-day life. If you don't write that book you've been wanting to write, usually no one finds out. We just **quietly bury the bodies of our failures** (I'll be the first to raise my hand and say I've been guilty of that one!). That's why I would advise you to **create opportunities for public accountability**.

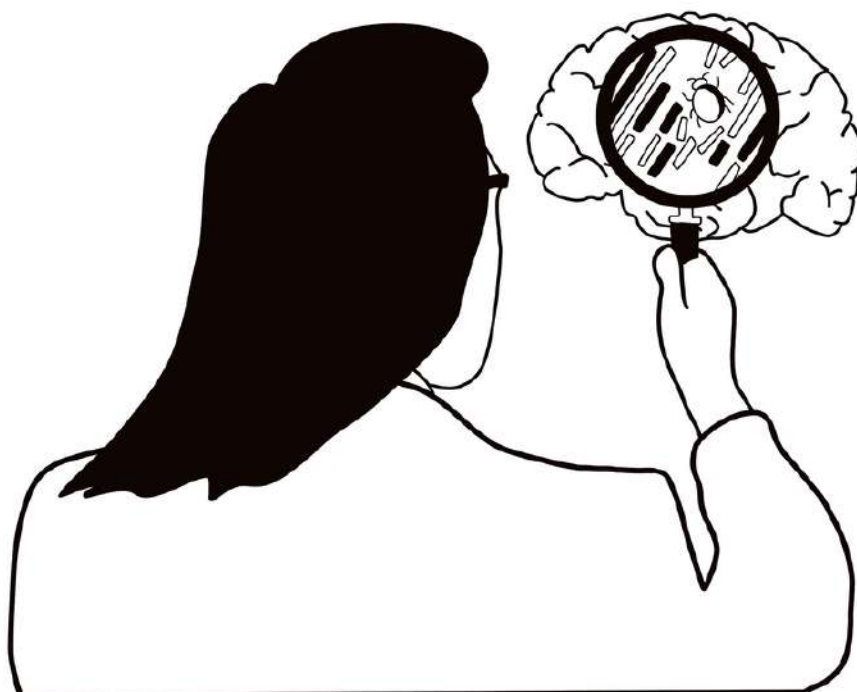
Whenever we launch a new course, Carey and I advertise it before we've even created it and start taking people's money in pre-sales. That provides **inescapable public accountability**. People have paid for the course, and they expect it to be ready on the date we promised. The consequence of missing that date is unthinkable for us. People would say, "*You are ripping us off! You promised it by this date and didn't deliver!*" There's no better accountability for us, and we've performed minor miracles to launch on time.

My client Ash is a web designer. He beat out his competition on a big deal by guaranteeing the client that they would launch on a specific date—or they wouldn't pay a dime. In place of the future website, he had a countdown timer to the launch date. He told me, "*I've never been more productive in my life!*"

This technique can even work for **personal goals**. My client Dita committed to a weight loss challenge that asked her to post photos of herself in just a sports bra every week for two months. She said, "*You better believe I stuck to my diet... I knew I had that photo coming up on Sunday!*"

LIMITING MINDSETS CHEAT SHEET

*From Chapter 13 of
Winning The Week: How To Plan A Successful Week, Every Week*





1. LIMITING TRUTH:

“I don’t have enough hours in the day!”

The kernel of truth inside is: yes, you have more things on your task list than time to do them. But it's also a trap because it doesn't give you any leads on how to solve the problem.

The higher truth is that *there IS enough time to get the important things accomplished, but only if you take extreme ownership of your time.*



2. LIMITING TRUTH:

"I just can't stay focused. There must be something wrong with me."

That's the kernel of truth here—every brain is different, and some of us have more trouble focusing than others. But once you tell yourself that this is an unshakeable feature of your brain, you fall into a victim story.

The higher truth is that *focus is more about your environment than it is about you, and there is a lot you can control and change in your environment.*



3. LIMITING TRUTH:

"I've just got too much on my plate."

It has a ring of truth to it because it's likely that you have put too much on your plate. But again, this thought traps you and places you in a victim posture. Let's get real: your task list will outpace your capacity to finish it.

The higher truth here is that *success isn't about getting everything done. It's about getting the right things done, at the right time, in the right way.*

4. LIMITING TRUTH:

“I don’t control my __” (time / money / priorities / schedule)

This one is common when you have a lot of competing responsibilities and you're trying to meet all of them simultaneously.

Invariably, you'll bend yourself into a pretzel to make it work—and the result is feeling like a prisoner in your life. It's easy to see why you might start to believe that you are a slave to your responsibilities and the people around you.

But again, that puts you in a victim posture when it comes to your key resources—and nothing good comes from that. As a coach, I know I'm talking to someone like this when I make suggestions to improve, and they relentlessly respond:

- "My boss would never let me __"
- "My team would never let me __"
- "My company culture would never let me __"
- "My wife would never let me __"
- "My kids would never let me __"

The higher truth is that *your ownership of your key resources is inalienable. It can't be given up without your consent. (Key resources include your time, your energy, your money, etc.)*

5. LIMITING TRUTH:

"This imperfect ___ is keeping me from results."

This one refers to the "if onlys" of life. People get obsessed with a crystal clear vision of what life should be. This vision is funny because if life has one consistent quality, it's that it doesn't cooperate with anyone's plans. Despite this, we still develop strong expectations around our perfect solutions, which are then promptly dashed. Crestfallen, we use this as an excuse to play the victim:

- "I could have been on time if only I hadn't hit traffic!"
- "I could have stuck to my diet if only it hadn't been the holidays."
- "I could have quit smoking if only my wife had quit too."
- "We could have hit the deadline if only that last-minute emergency hadn't popped up!"

The higher truth is that **there are zero perfect solutions and infinite imperfect solutions**. Modern life is inherently chaotic, and it's your job to navigate a path through those churning waters. While your ideal solution rarely works out, you'll find that imperfect solutions perfectly fit your imperfect reality.





6. LIMITING TRUTH:

"I can't focus or motivate because I'm so worried about [an external situation out of my control]."

There are so many things to worry about! The problem with worrying about situations outside your control is that you can't possibly affect the outcome, so every bit of energy expended on it is wasted.

The higher truth comes by asking yourself, *"what's the optimal level of thinking and caring about this that can positively affect the situation?"*

7. LIMITING TRUTH:

"The stakes are so high, it's freaking me out!"

Once you start gaining responsibilities in life, high-stakes moments can begin to mess with your mental game.

But ironically, the higher the stakes of the game, the more you need to stay calm and loose. When you tense up, it affects your performance negatively. Of course, practice helps with this, so the more you can prepare for the big moment, the better off you'll be. But when the moment comes, the best thing to do is stay loose and play it like a game.

That's why the higher truth here is to *play it like a game and try to enjoy yourself. If unchecked, life can get too serious. But it's important to remember how few real consequences there are in the grand scheme of things. Failure—in our plush, spoiled modern world—isn't really failure at all. In practically every area of life, we can restart the video game and play again.*

So relax, and try to enjoy yourself a little. Bring your attention back to the very next action: the next kick, the next throw. That's what high-stakes moments deserve because your best energy will shine through.



8. LIMITING TRUTH:

"It feels like life gets harder and harder every year."

If you're playing the game of life right, each win brings new responsibilities. So yes, life tends to get more challenging and complex as you progress. But that's not all that's changing. You're changing too. Each win and each failure is teaching you, helping you grow and adapt.

The higher truth is *it never gets easier, but you get better. Every time you win the week, you'll learn new lessons and forge yourself in the fire of experience.*

9. LIMITING TRUTH:

"I can't be expected to play if I'm hurt."

There's no better excuse to play the victim than when you're genuinely hurt. That could be a physical hurt, like an injury or an illness. Or it could be psychological pain, like a crisis or mental health moment.

Regardless, the tendency is to run to the sidelines of your game and tap out. Nobody could blame you. To be clear, there are moments when it's not wise to keep playing. Like moments when there are no severe consequences on the line, and the benefit of playing hurt is far outweighed by the costs or risks.

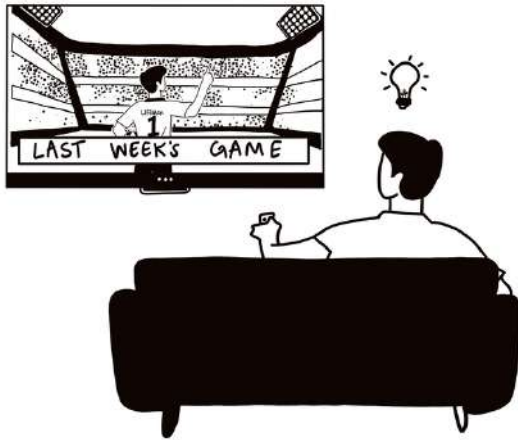
But there are also moments when—as the star player in the game of your life—your team needs you to play hurt and be the hero who pulls out the win.

The higher truth is that *you can give yourself permission to play hurt when the game is on the line. If you wait to be in perfect shape to play your game, you won't be a starting player.*



LEARN A LESSON CHEATSHEET

From Chapter 4 of
Winning The Week: How To Plan A Successful Week, Every Week



Looking for a lesson or improvement each week creates a positive feedback loop, wherein you get slightly better each week. The impact is life-changing within one year. See this as an opportunity to try new things, evaluate your wins and losses, and fine-tune your game.

Use the following questions to find a lesson from your past week:

Groundhog Day Question: *If you could relive the past week a thousand times, what would the perfect execution have looked like?*

Double Down Question: *What worked well this week that I should double down on next week?*