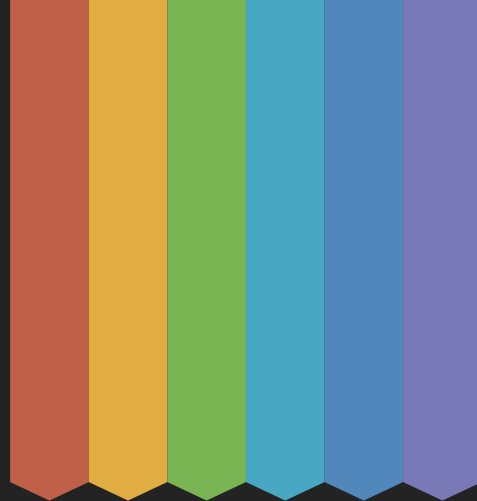


ALICIA⚡
McKAY



Get Your Sh*t Together!

A practical productivity guide
for ambitious high achievers.



The pressures we face at work and home mean there will always be more things to do than time to do them.

We live in an always-connected, fast-paced environment where it looks like everyone else is coping fine, and we're the only ones battling.

But we're all battling. There's too much on.

Many of us are running an "invisible list" (see page 10) —all the little things that keep our lives, work, and household running smoothly.

We don't see anyone else's invisible list, so we get the twisted idea that we're the only ones not keeping up.

But that's bullshit. If you feel overwhelmed and frustrated, it's not because you're failing at anything. The way the world is makes it hard to feel any other way.

This guide is designed to help you be more awesome, but let's not forget that you already are.

You work hard, you try hard, and the first step to getting on top of things is to stop and appreciate that.

Some great tools in here will help you manage your time, but it's just as important to stay on top of your mindset and mental and emotional energy.

Otherwise, you'll immediately fill up any space you make with other things you should be doing.

Use these tools with caution and self-compassion. It's time for less guilt, fewer apologies and fairer expectations.

Now, with that important disclaimer out of the way... let's get your shit together!

- AM

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To really #GYST, you need to...

Kill Stress

Stress is a killer. Whether it's emotional, physical, work, family, or friends stressing us out, our bodies respond in the same way.

It's not good for us in the long term. Running our emergency system too often is a self-fulfilling cycle— the more stressed we are, the more stressed we're likely to get.

Over time, that level of chronic stress messes with our whole body – disrupting our immune system, upsetting digestion and reproduction, increasing the risk of heart attack and making us age faster. It messes with our brain too, making it more likely that we wind up anxious or depressed

The upshot: We need to kill stress before it kills us. Think of stress as the gap between your expectations and reality—killing stress requires tackling one or both sides of that equation.

When we seize control of our mindset, goals and priorities, we can tweak our expectations to our benefit. When we master our schedule and behaviour, we can change our reality, too.

Make Space

Nothing important happens by accident. We need emotional, mental, and physical margins to think clearly and creatively. The more senior you are, the more margin you need—and the more you create, the more successful you will be.

When Michael Porter followed 27 CEOs of billion-dollar companies for 13 weeks, he found that the average CEO will spend 43% of their time on activities that further their business.

The most successful CEOs also report diligence about time away from work— exercising 45 minutes a day, sleeping 7 hours a night, spending time with their family, and engaging in hobbies.

We need to:

- Clear our mind
- Find some time
- Organise our place

When we do that, we can make space for the things we care about and find room for personal freedom, creativity, joy, and meaning.

Connect to purpose

Before we decide what and how to do it, let's consider why we're bothering to do it in the first place.

Purpose gets a bad rap. It's the domain of the woke and out-of-touch millennial who wants to shirk the real work... right?

Wrong.

Purpose isn't fluff – it's a responsibility. If you don't have the resolve and determination to do good shit, there's no point getting your shit together.

People who have meaningful long-term goals, ones that change the lives of others, have more enjoyable lives.

These conversations get woo-woo quickly, but leading with purpose is not about navel-gazing. It's about tapping into the potential

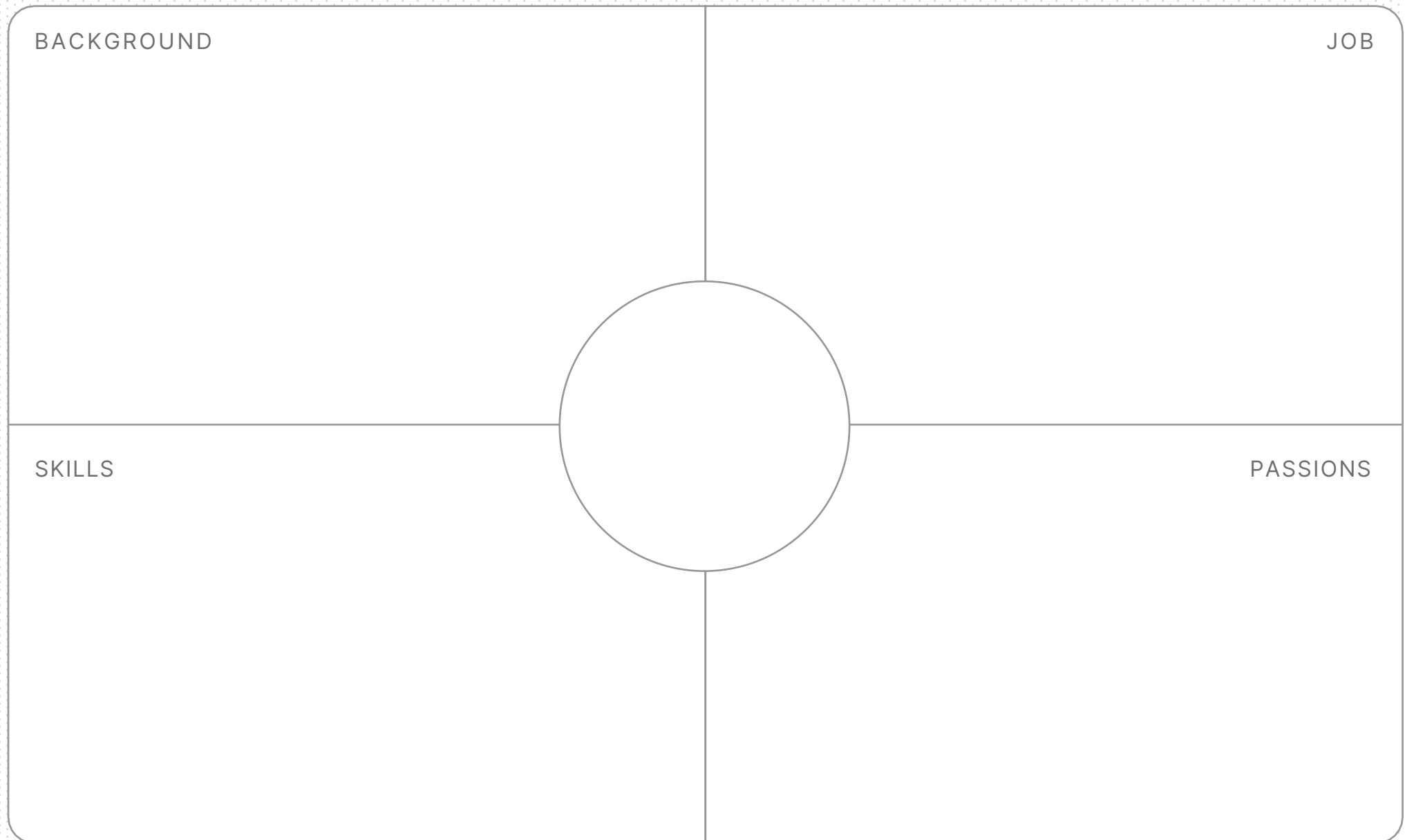
to do work that matters by providing a guiding set of values and principles.

Purpose isn't about changing the world. It's about using our limited time doing stuff we care about. Discovering your purpose is about finding the things you care about that are bigger than you, so you can do more of that.

7 questions to find your purpose

1. What struggle or sacrifice are you willing to tolerate?
2. What were you passionate about as a child, even if you weren't rewarded for it?
3. What do you get obsessed with? The stuff that you get so focused on you forget to eat or sleep?
4. How would you like to embarrass yourself?
5. What problem do you care enough about to start solving it?
6. What do you most want to do with your time if you have nothing else to do and nowhere else to go?
7. What would you want to be remembered for if you knew your life was ending?

Purpose map



What is your purpose?



KEY FOCUS AREAS

1

2

3

4

Reset your mindset

Guilt has us worrying about letting people down, fearing we're not doing enough and trying desperately to keep control. Guilt is an unwinnable game, and it flares up when we don't meet our own unrealistic expectations.

Women are particularly bothered by guilt. In the last 24 hours, 95% of women have felt guilty at least once! High-performance women feel pressure not just to be amazing but to do it invisibly. We don't want people to see us struggle so they have no idea how stressed and tired we are.

We run an invisible list behind the scenes to keep up the façade, which means many of the things we worry about aren't visible, asked for, or valued. We don't see anyone else's invisible list, so we get the twisted idea that we're the only ones not keeping up.

Guilt is internalised torture. It's not a productive emotion that motivates us; it's a drain that holds us back from our potential.

Unless we give ourselves permission, dispense with apology, and channel our energy with care, we do the world a disservice. It's time to tackle guilt, change our story, and shine a light on our invisible list.

5 tips to tackle guilt

1. Acknowledge - that everything is more likely to turn to shit than not, and celebrate the great.
2. Own your choices - chances are you made them for a good reason.
3. Get perspective - very little of the things we worry about matter. Most stuff doesn't.
4. Let go - give other people's feelings back. Don't decide how they feel on their behalf.
5. Be your friend - talk to yourself like you would speak to your best friend!

Telling the truth

SOURCE OF GUILT

WHAT I SAY TO MYSELF

WHAT I'D SAY TO A FRIEND

The invisible list

What are all the things on your mind that don't make it onto the to-do list or the schedule – but they matter?

What do you do for yourself, your loved ones or your community that gets taken for granted because it stays invisible?



Plan for disaster

We do what we can to protect children from making the wrong choice from an early age, and this sets a dangerous precedent.

Rushing to correct behaviour robs children of an important lesson: that mistakes are how we learn. Worse, it teaches us that we aren’t strong enough to deal with obstacles.

This kind of thinking stays with us into adulthood, and it doesn’t always manifest in low self-esteem. Defeatist thinking can show up as perfectionism.

Perfectionism is a progress killer. When we’re worried about doing the wrong thing, we fear challenging tasks, take fewer risks and are less creative.

When we think of doing as learning and expect things to go wrong, we gain a new perspective that helps us make progress faster.

It doesn’t mean we should wait for things to fail – we can prepare for the worst.

When we use contingent planning instead of time planning, we assume things will go wrong and focus on preparing for them rather than avoiding risk entirely – and we feel better when things go wrong.

How to prepare for the worst

Anticipate disaster—when making plans, don’t default to the best-case scenario. Look for all the ways things might go wrong, consider how you can head them off in the past, and consider how you will respond when the inevitable happens.

Cultivate curiosity—mistakes, disruption, and failure aren’t signs of failure. They’re signs you’re trying something new. Head into each day, project, or week with a curiosity mindset: “I wonder what will go wrong that I haven’t thought of yet?”

Planning for disaster

What are the worst things that could happen?

DEFINE

How might you prevent each from happening?

PREVENT

If the worst happens, how do you fix it? Temporarily, and permanently?

REPAIR

Morning meetings

Assume that every day something will go wrong – and adopt a curiosity mindset. “I wonder what it will be today?”

YESTERDAY

What went well? What didn't go well?
What did you learn? What are you proud of?

TODAY

What is happening today? What might go wrong? What will you do to prepare?

TOMORROW

What is happening tomorrow? What do you need to prepare today?

Schedule your priorities

"What's most likely to distract us on any given day are the things we have a good reason for doing but not a great reason for doing."

– JAMES CLEAR

If I looked at your calendar for the coming week, could I tell what matters most to you?

Those who kept a diary as teenagers will remember how cringy it was to read an old entry. The same applies to how we spend our time as adults. Much of what we do is far less important than it feels at the time. Try looking at a to-do list from a month ago. You might be surprised or amused to see how many things seem irrelevant.

As amusing as it might be, it's dangerous. Minutiae crowd out important stuff. The stuff that matters and makes the most difference is often the hardest to make space for.

In our personal lives, that's often self-care – sleep, exercise, nutrition and quality time. At work, it's the big picture stuff – strategy, team bonding, important projects, which shift to

the side while the BAU rolls on like a steam train.

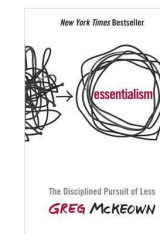
Nothing important happens by accident. Having goals and deciding to do things isn't enough to make them happen; we have to align our intentions with reality.

We can do this by heading off future decision fatigue, batching our choices ahead of time, and making appointments for the important stuff.

The first step is to clarify our priorities so we can separate the important from the justifiable and channel our activity toward the bigger picture.

4 questions to ask yourself

1. What are my most important priorities?
2. Does my calendar reflect that?
3. Does my budget reflect that?
4. How can I change that?



RECOMMENDATION

Essentialism
The Disciplined Pursuit of Less
GREG
MCKEOWN

The \$100 game

Not all priorities are created equally!

1. You can't work with what you can't see.

List each of your important priorities.

2. Allocate a hypothetical \$100 across your priorities according to their importance.

Rules

- You can't divide your \$100 evenly
- You must spend the full \$100
- No extra money!

PRIORITY

\$

Schedule what matters

What gets scheduled, gets done. Treat your priorities as important appointments – and keep them.

PRIORITY

TASK

DAY & TIME

Focus your attention

We need to process more information than ever before. We own more things, live in bigger houses, use more technology and expect more from our days.

But our attention hasn't expanded to suit. Focus is a limited resource, and every distraction limits our ability to make meaningful progress.

In a 2010 study, Harvard psychologists Matthew Killingsworth and Daniel Gilbert found that people spend almost 47% of their waking hours thinking about something other than what they're doing.

If we keep our emails open all day and respond as they come in, rummage around finding lost things and deal with constant interruptions, we lose most of our time.

Distraction is exhausting, and important work requires more mental energy. Have you ever sat in a messy room and struggled to concentrate?

Distraction likes mess, but focus needs order. Remove mental and physical clutter by taking things off your list and organising your life.

Pay attention to your attention. Stick with tasks until you complete them. Block out time for deep work. Be intentional about how you communicate and tackle distraction with power!

From the moment you start tidying, you will be compelled to reset your life."

– MARIE KONDO

Use the 4D's for low-priority tasks

Do Minimum – Not everything needs to be done well; some things just need to be done. For low-priority tasks, do the minimum viable amount. Beware: this is a stressful option that requires a continued mental load.

To do minimum, ask 'how'

Delegate – Outsource non-critical or expert tasks. Warning: make sure you delegate the accountability and the task, or you've created extra work for yourself by managing others.

To delegate, ask 'who'

Delete – Many things simply don't need to be done. Experiment with temporary deletions first, then see what you can remove completely.

To delete, ask 'what'

Delay – Not everything needs to be done now. Use this with caution: all delayed tasks need to have a completion date.

To delay, ask 'when'

Task treatments

TASK

TREATMENT

Do Minimum, Delegate, Delete, Delay

DETAILS

Get organised

A tidy life is a tidy mind. Look at your filing system, desk and communication patterns, and get them in order. Close your email client. Turn push notifications off. Tidy your desk. Then breath a deep sigh of relief ... ahh.

TO ORGANISE

WHEN

HOW

Change your habits

If attention is a limited resource, willpower is a scarce one. Making room for what matters needs new habits and behaviours – but these don't happen by accident.

Relying on enthusiasm is a short-term strategy. For habits and behaviours that matter, we need to change our habits, create systems and design an environment that makes success easy.

Good systems give us the mental and physical freedom to be creative, seize opportunities and try new things.

Good habits create a better default, so we don't go backwards even when we're not our best.

Small things make a big difference. Try not to touch things more than once.

Build new habits slowly by creating new cues and rewards.

Remove bad habits quickly by taking them out of your life entirely.

Easy systems and habits

1. Make your bed every morning.
2. Plan your meals.
3. Put your gym gear next to your bed.
4. Pack your bag the night before.
5. Stop buying junk food.
6. Take your lunch.
7. Spend money to gain time.
8. Throw out old stuff – possessions, projects, people and pressure.

Reducing friction

Minor friction adds up across a day.

Time-wasting activities that can't be treated by the 4D's should be systemised as much as possible.

How can you make repeatable tasks faster and easier?

You might want to buy a second Kindle, hang a new hook in your doorway, keep a bag packed with spare chargers and fresh gym gear, or use a social media scheduler... list your hacks here!

TIME WASTER

HACK

Start small with habits – tag them onto existing activities, like brushing your teeth or packing your bag. Use this template to list new things you want to start doing, identify why they're important, and find ways to make them easy. Tackle one habit at a time.

I WILL START...

BECAUSE THEN I CAN...

TO MAKE IT EASY I WILL...