



Experiment 1 – Stream of Consciousness

Encourage your mind to wander:

- Grab a notebook (or paper) and pen and set a timer for 10 minutes. (A 30-minute stretch works best, but baby steps, eh?)
- Write whatever comes into your head. Just release the flow of consciousness. It doesn't matter if what you write doesn't make sense, or even if you admit, 'I'm writing stuff but I don't know why and this feels stupid, and now I'm thinking about giraffes.' Keep writing until the alarm goes off.
- If you can eventually get to a full 30 minutes each day, particularly when you first wake, you'll notice the benefit.

This exercise is based on Julia Cameron's 'Morning Pages' from *The Artist's Way*. 'They are about anything and everything that crosses your mind — and they are for your eyes only. Morning Pages provoke, clarify, comfort, cajole, prioritise and synchronise the day at hand.'

Experiment 2 – How long is your Fuse questionnaire

There's no surer sign of high stress levels brought on by being in a constant state of surge than what we've described as a short fuse. In a world in which everything is urgent, there will always be plenty of opportunities for tempers to flare.

The antidote is patience. But first let's check in to see how long your fuse is. Answer the following questions honestly (no-one else will see your answers). Put the number next to your answer in the column to the right. Then add them up and check your response below.

<p>You're stuck in traffic after a long day at work. What are you doing?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Singing out loud 2. Zoning out 3. Freaking out 4. Cursing heaven and earth 	
<p>You just got dumped in the worst possible way. What do you reach for?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Google — to search for a month-long meditation retreat 2. A stiff drink 3. A phone to call a friend 4. A broom to clean up the broken shards of the glass you threw across the room 	
<p>When things aren't going well, what activity do you find the most energising?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yoga 2. Walking or jogging 3. Breaking things 4. Grabbing a gun and shooting something 	
<p>What prompts you to swear under your breath?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A near-miss car accident 2. Stubbing your toe 3. Your computer freezes, again 4. Just about anything 	

<p>When is it okay to use your car horn?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When an accident is imminent 2. When someone cuts in front of you 3. When someone takes longer than three seconds to move at a green light 4. When someone crosses the street too slowly 	
<p>You're finishing something on your computer when the flight attendant asks you to put it away. How do you react?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Smile and put it away instantly 2. Be a little bothered but put it away 3. Roll your eyes and scowl, but eventually put it away 4. Angrily ask why, berate them for asking, arguing that the plane will be fine whether your device is on or off 	
<p>It's no use crying over spilt milk</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. True 2. Depends how badly you wanted the milk 3. Do you know how much milk costs!? 4. False 	
<p>You get an email from your boss that really bugs you. How do you respond?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pause and pick up the phone. It's likely to be a misunderstanding. 2. Reply with a question for clarity. 3. Kill 'em with kindness. 4. Let them have it with both barrels. 	
<p>You're on a long flight and there's a kicking toddler sitting behind you. What do you do?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ignore it — it's the way of the world. 2. Ask the flight attendant to do something about it. 3. Give the parent 'a look'. 4. Tell the parents to control their kid. 	



Resources

Score of 10–15: Your fuse is so long it never seems to light the bomb.

Centred — Not much fazes you. You guide your ship well through stormy seas. It takes a big wave to rock you, but with a little work you always find calm waters.

Score of 16–25: There's time between the fuse being lit and choosing your response.

Composed — You are mostly settled and while you may get a little flustered, you generally have the wherewithal to breath deep and remain poised.

Score of 26–35: You must work hard to manage your short fuse.

Controlled — You have to try hard to control your responses. For the most part you succeed in keeping your fraying temper under wraps.

Score of 36–40: There's almost no space between the stimulus and your response.

Crazed — You're like a firecracker. The slightest upset can provoke a nuclear response.



Experiment 3 – Everyday holiday reading

Actor Patrick Stewart often has to be up, showered and ready to go for a 5 am pickup. He has built his adaptive capacity into the morning by setting his alarm for 4 am), giving him time to make a cup of tea and go back to bed and read.

‘I don’t read the paper because it makes me angry. I don’t read my emails because it usually makes me anxious and gets my mind going. I read a book. The kind of book that you pick up when you go on vacation. The “I’ve got nothing to do book”.’ He reads in the morning because he fears the day will get away from him and he won’t have time for it in the evening.

I suggest there’s a secondary gain. Imagine starting every day in the relaxed frame of mind usually associated with being on vacation instead of dashing out of the blocks on high alert.

What kinds of books do you like to read on holiday? For me it’s science fiction, or what I like to call ‘lose yourself in them’ books. It has to be the kind of book that signals to your brain that you are on vacation.

- Put that book beside your bed before you go to sleep.
- Set you alarm for 30 minutes earlier than usual.
- Pick up that vacation book and read for half an hour.
- Try this for 30 days and take note of what you feel.

Experiment 4 – Personal Kanban

Time to Kanban your to-do list!

What’s Kanban? you ask. A Kanban board visually depicts work or tasks at various stages of progress towards completion using cards (or sticky notes). It has its roots in lean manufacturing, and for our purposes we can keep it simple.

I prefer the old-fashioned sticky note on a wall or whiteboard, but there are plenty of great software options as well. I’ll leave you to decide what you prefer.

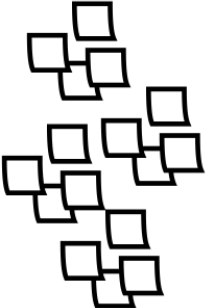


To do (or backlog)	In progress	Completed
		

Table 4.1: Kanban

Put all the individual tasks or items on sticky notes. (Initially they will all be in the first column.) Choose no more than five (three is best) from the first column to move to the second column. These are what you are working on today or this week. As you complete a task, move the sticky note to the third column, then choose another task from the first column to move into the second.



Resources

Experiment 5 – Gratitude journal

For the next 30 days, set a timer on your watch for a specific time — let's say 10.00 am — take three deep breaths, and write down three things in that moment for which you are grateful. Don't worry if what you write is repetitious; you are allowed to be grateful every day for having a job you love!



Experiment 6 – 40 bags in 40 days

My sister belongs to an online group that calls itself ‘40 bags in 40 days’. The idea is that each day, for 40 days, you take a bag of stuff out of your house. The size of the bag is up to you and in some cases it’s symbolic. For you, it could be:

- a small shopping/grocery bag
- a large garbage bag
- a small zip-lock bag
- or even a suitcase full of emotional baggage (ha!).

The rule is that it has to actually be removed from the house, whether to be dropped into the garbage or recycling bin, or into the car to be donated, or to be listed on Gumtree.

If you don’t know where to start, the pantry is a great place. Anything that’s past its use-by date goes into the bag!

There are online groups advocating ‘Buy nothing new for a month’ and ‘Shop your wardrobe for a year’. The first challenges you not to buy new clothing for a year, and the second shows you how to ‘buy from your own stock’.

Challenge accepted!



Experiment 7 – 5-4-3-2-1

I love this activity, called '5-4-3-2-1', from digital product designer Ryder Carroll's The Bullet Journal Method. I have adapted it slightly here. All you need is a sheet of A4 paper.

1. Holding the sheet in landscape position, fold it in half vertically.
2. Write at the top of the left half 'Professional' and at the top of the right 'Personal'. Draw a line underneath these headings.
3. Now draw lines so the remainder of the page is divided into 5 segments
4. Number each segment, counting down from 5. These stand for:
 - 5 years: What do you want to achieve in the next five years?
 - 4 quarters: What do you want to achieve over the next year?
 - 3 months: What do you want to get done in the next quarter?
 - 2 weeks: What do you need to complete in the next two weeks?
 - 1 day: What must you do in the next 24 hours?
5. Make a mark next to the highest priority items in each list.
6. The idea is that you aren't allowed to move on to the next most important item until either the first one is completed or you have decided you are not going to do it.

The table on the next page provides an example.

	Personal life	Professional life
5 years	<i>Own 3 investment properties Kids finish high school* Family holiday in Europe</i>	<i>Promotion to partner or senior manager* Doing an international assignment</i>
4 quarters	<i>Increase net worth by \$50K College/university applications for Jane* Put funds into holiday account</i>	<i>Lead a team project* Build my network with regional and international colleagues</i>
3 months	<i>Review budget and financial plan Co-create a study and homework plan with the kids* Hang a map of Europe on the wall in the family room.</i>	<i>Apply for leadership development training* Volunteer to present at regional forum</i>
2 weeks	<i>Set up automatic payments for network and holiday accounts Book annual leave around the time that Jane's exams are happening, to support her*</i>	<i>Discuss leadership development training and regional forums with manager at my next 1:1*</i>
1 Day	<i>Investigate short/medium-term investment options*</i>	<i>Prepare for 1:1 meeting with manager* Review regional forum schedule</i>



Savings Plan Framework



1 DECELERATE
stop or slow down

2 DECOMPRESS
take stock

3 DECIDE
organise and choose



4 DISENGAGE
create boundaries

5 DISCONNECT
be purposeful

6 DEVOTE
be joyful



7 DESIGN
create a space

8 DECLUTTER
give or throw away

9 DECOMPLICATE
simplify



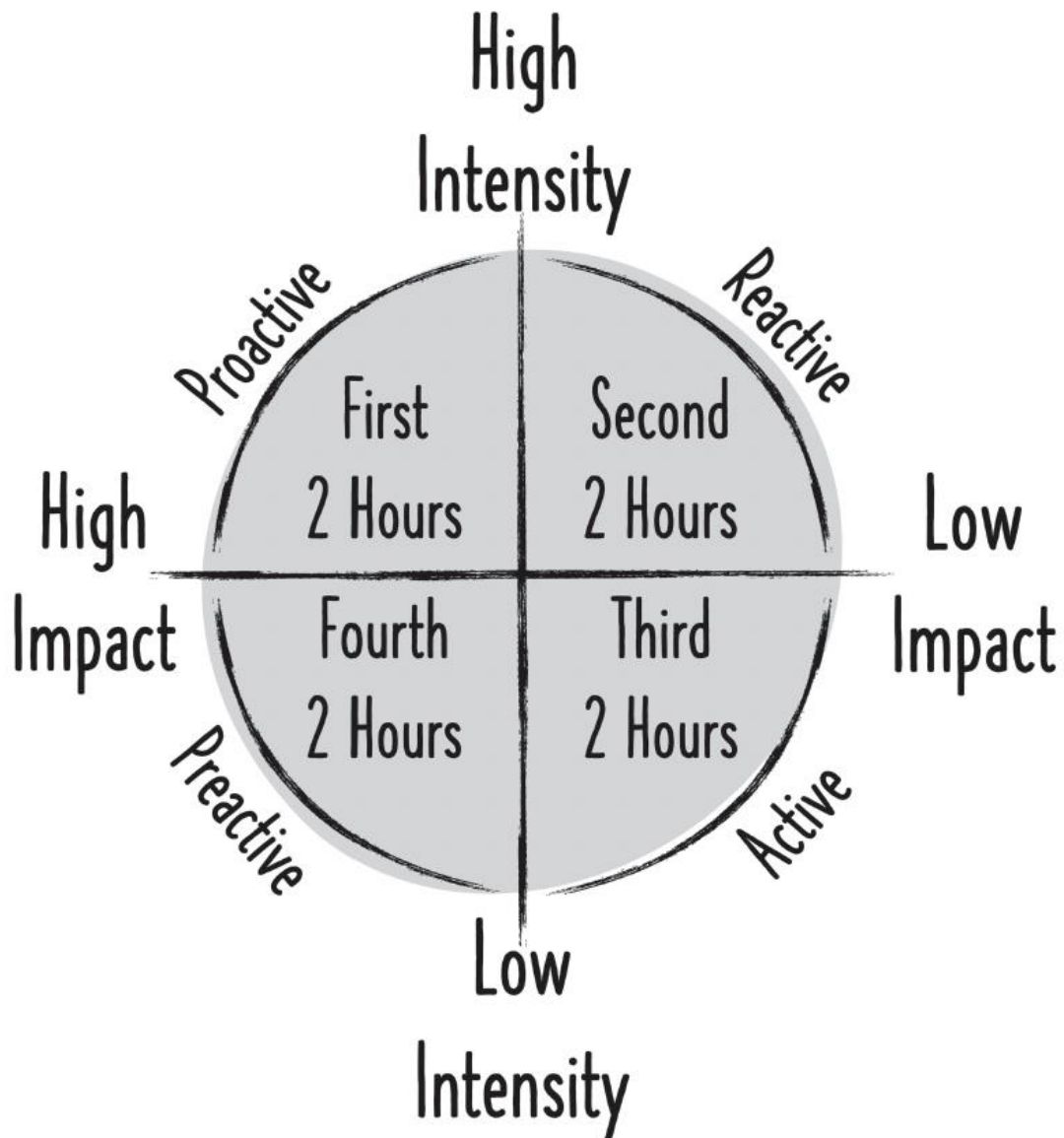
10 DEFINE
create a vision

11 DEFRAG
batch your work

12 DELEGATE
be essential,
not involved



BONUS - First 2 Hours Framework & blank template





First 2 Hours	Second 2 Hours
.....
High Intensity	Low Impact
Reactive	Active
.....
High Impact	Low Intensity
Reactive	Active
.....
Fourth 2 Hours	Third 2 Hours



DECLUTTER – 30 DAY CHALLENGE

Track your efforts for 30 days

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



DECLUTTER – 30 DAY CHALLENGE

Use the following framework, or the blank one on the next page.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
Kitchen Cupboard(s)	Fridge	Freezer	Kitchen Cupboard(s)	Medicine Cabinet	Bathroom Cabinet(s)
Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Day 11	Day 12
Kitchen Drawers	Bedroom Closet(s)	Bedside Drawers	Handbag or briefcase	Bedroom Drawers	Electronics
Day 13	Day 14	Day 15	Day 16	Day 17	Day 18
Board Games	Makeup	Toiletries	Under the bed(s)	Shoes	Storage Room/ Garage
Day 19	Day 20	Day 21	Day 22	Day 23	Day 24
Candles	TV Cabinet	Mail	Under kitchen sink	Car	Entry or Hallway
Day 25	Day 26	Day 27	Day 28	Day 29	Day 30
Paperwork	Desk	Living Room	Books/ Bookshelves	Outdoor Space	Linen



Resources

DECLUTTER – 30 DAY CHALLENGE

Create your own!

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