

### **Pre-assessing and Assessing Practise.**

The first part of this training, pre-assessment, is going to seem a bit tedious at first, but keep in mind the goal is to first find clarity, then use the clarity to make the project at hand more fulfilling and get the most out of it while giving the most you can. The key to this part is to make it a habit for every project you take so you can start off with the right mindset.

The second part of this training is getting down to the first assessments of the project, life surrounding it, and all the chaos that might come your way. Once you've identified that, you'll make a rudimentary map to get you from point A to point B.

Remember: Each project is going to be different. You will have different motivations, expectations, and desired outcomes for each project. However, the system that you put in place for doing a quick reality check and taming the chaos will be the same for every project. This system from getting clarity to planning for chaos is what you need to really hone here in this training.

## **PART 1: PRE-ASSESSMENT**

### **Motivation.**

*Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma — which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary. — Steve Jobs*

Think of this way: You might work for a paycheck. We all do. Even I do, the person that owns a company, has a boss. I have to answer to myself, but I also serve the clients. It's not all about me, but it's about what serves both my needs and theirs.

It's the same whether you work for yourself or work for others. It's a give and take with knowledge, training, and skills when you work for another.

Another example: One of our clients, Travis, is a draftsman and engineer. He didn't start off that way. He started off with his farm skills of welding — which he hates doing day in and day out — and working for a company doing relatively mindless work for 3 years.

Travis absolutely hated it. He hated the heat, the hours on his feet, the low pay, and the 50+ hours a week because there were just not enough welders that could do the job. To say he wanted out is an understatement.

While he was working in the shop welding one rail after another, he listened to podcast, audiobooks, and other things to help his mind grow. He showed off his math skills when problems came up, and helped find elegant solutions for the drafting department that would also help the welding team make the rails.

When the company had openings in the drafting department, they snagged him up and transferred him upstairs where he could help solve problems before they started. Even now he gets to work between the two departments facilitating the projects and dialogue between the two so projects get done more efficiently.

Travis's history tells us something about life. It tells us that no matter where we are at or what we are doing, we can still strive for what we want. Little steps every day get you to what your dreams are.

And you know what? Dreams can and do change. Don't over think it, just do it.

Perhaps one day you want to be an engineer, the next a dancer. Strive for being an engineer the first day by finding a way to work towards it. The next day practise your dance of life.

Why?

Because some day you might fuse the two and become the world's best dancing engineer, which would be not just entertaining, but also fulfilling for you.

### Finding and Defining Your Motivation.

First, let's address the bright pink argyle elephant in the room. There are days when you feel like no matter what you tell yourself, you just don't feel like doing anything. You could have a well laid out plan for your life and a solid vision, but that doesn't mean you wake up with a fire in your soul every single day.

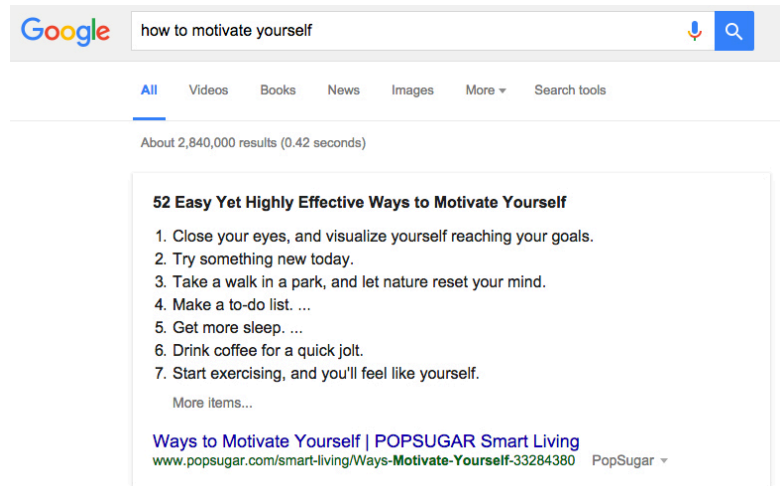
We all have those days. On those days, take a break. Read a book. Look at hilarious cat videos (I recommend Simon's Cat). The thing is, what breaks me out of a slump (exercising) may not break you out of a slump. That's because everyone of us has our own triggers. Google ideas on how to break the slump. There are over 2 million ideas on how to break a slump and get motivated. One of the triggers is bound to help you.

When you need it, the internet is there. But now, we're going to work on all those other days when you wake up knowing that you have a future that you're working towards.

Remember the stuff you worked in from Module1? Yep. That's comin' back to the front again.

All you need to know are the answers to the following. Use your values and mission statement as a cheat sheet... you've already done the work.

What are your goals in life? What are your values? Below, write what you can do right now to begin working towards living those values and achieving those goals.



*Illustration 1: There are lots of ways to bust a slump; try a few and keep a log of what works for you.*

These will serve as a list of options for that you can choose from to motivate you for any given project. And for each project you can use the handy printable at the end of this training to keep your thoughts organised.

### **Expectations (reality check)**

Like motivations, your expectations for each project will change. Your expectations will also hinge on two factors: What you are aiming to get by the end of the project (motivations and goals) and what you can expect from the client/boss/colleagues.

So, how do you prepare for that?

Create a system to gather and organise information. It's that simple. It's also that hard.

Some of us are more natural at building systems than others. I am not a natural system builder, so I have had many failures of what works and what doesn't work with my ADHD. And frankly, that's how everyone should find a system that works for them: Try something for a while, and if it works, keep it. If it fails, try something else.

That being said, use the outline below for a several projects – several being at least 5 in this case – and see what works and what doesn't work. I think you'll be pleasantly surprised at how this helps, but you'll also find room for improvement based on what specific types of projects you're doing.

#### Step 1: Start with what you know.

I like to take a piece of paper and fold it in half lengthwise. On one side I write my name, the other the other person/party's name. Then, I start jotting down notes of everything that is expected to come out of the project.

This is easy to do for their side, usually, because it's things like deadlines, how they expect communications to happen, etc. Your side is also easy to do because you've got your vision crystal clear, and your current goals and motivations in front of you. The key is seeing how you can achieve a step towards your ultimate goals in that.

#### Step 2: Ask for more detail.

A lesson from the military is that you never have enough information to be successful under stress. And life is full of stresses, many of which are uncontrollable and unpredictable. So, save yourself some stress and ask for as many details as what comes to mind.

Before you leave this step, remember to ask for which are their top priorities of these expectations. This will save you sanity later. Trust me.

#### Step 3: Write down and sort expectations based on priorities.

A lot of people slip up on this step, but it's really important. There are times when not all expectations can be met. Remember, we're planning for chaos here, and that means being realistic. Put all expectations in order of priority for both parties in case all hell breaks loose and you can't meet every single criteria.

Hint: If the project at hand is something that you are aiming for a high grade or a repeat customer, put their expectation priorities in front of your own. This way you can ensure you are "playing to the crowd" and getting that ultimate grade/testimonial/raise out of them.

“  
Don't  
over think it,  
JUST  
DO IT!  
”

### Step 4: Find the overlap.

Again, if you are trying to get good grades, a glowing testimonial, or a raise, you need to put the other's priorities first. However, that doesn't mean you have to ignore your own. See if you can't find some overlap, starting with your top priority and moving down the list. Something is bound to click. This is where you will be able to focus your energies to make the most of the project for both sides.

That's it. After you have this, you can get to work. Speaking of work... try this system with this arbitrary, but common assignment often given out to students: Write a short, 500 word essay on your thoughts about pop culture. (Use the space below for both your organisation notes and your essay.)

### Desired Outcomes (dreaming)

Desired outcomes aren't the priorities that fall later down in the list that you may not be able to get to. They are the lofty ideals that you shoot for, but have a decent chance of falling short of in the event that no miracle is waiting to greet you.

In my world of business ownership, this is often something like "glowing testimonial that brings in 2 additional clients that we can serve". Sure, I strive for that outcome, but I really can't control it. In the world of school work, it might be the A that you're working for. Or, in the world of a career, it might be the raise and corner office that you're keeping in site.

The point is, the desired outcome is the long range plan that you are aiming for. It looks like something like this in the big picture:

You want to save \$10,000 for a new car by the end of next year. (That's your motivation.) Your boss gives you a project to work on for a very important client. You expect that you will do the project well and receive another challenging assignment that will eventually lead to a better pay rate. (Expectation followed by desired outcome.)

Exercise: Use the paragraph above and your motivations from the first exercise in this training to come up with scenarios that are likely in your life. Aim for writing down 3 – 5 of them as they would relate to your personal circumstances and goals right now.

## **PART 2: ASSESSING THE TASK**

Now that you are firmly grounded in reality while keeping your head in the clouds, you're going to perfect the art of making a map. It's easy when you see the map in front of you and know where all the roads are. In life, we often don't write down the directions which makes us lose sight of the goal. I'm guilty of it too – even after years of perfecting this method, there are some days my hubris gets in the way. I believe that's called being human, and it happens to all of us. But, the more you do this, the more insanely god-like you can appear to the outside world, even when you are just winging it.

### Step 1: Acknowledging chaos

You know this thing called life we live in the middle of? It's not going away. Ever. (And that's a good thing.) It seems like every single time you've got an important project due/speech to prepare/conference to go to/etc. *life* happens. Birthday parties pop up, a relative has a baby, you need to go shopping for a gift... and all this on top of the normal day to day business of your own house.

Take 15 minutes and write down all of those little life things that come up in your world regularly. Do not stop early, just give it 15 minutes. Yes, you'll find most of them in the first 5, but as you continue to think for the 15 minutes, you'll remember holidays, birthdays, anniversaries, chores, errands, and other things you try to put to the back of your mind. Set your timer... and go.

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### Step 2: Planning for chaos

If you're lucky, the list above is relatively short. If you're normal, it's all over the map. If you're in the same boat as me, the list is long aaaand all over the place. (Welcome to Club Insanity, by the way.)

All this stuff? It's an illusion. Yes. An illusion. I once heard from a wise woman I called Grandma, "Life isn't about trying to do everything. It's about picking the things that matter most and doing those while the rest will wait. Pick your battles so you have the energy for other things. Don't waste your energy on things that don't matter.

I second that! (Even if half the time I fall under the sway of our society and try to be it all and do it all from time to time.)

Take the list above and divide into the following 3 categories:

MUST DO	WOULD LIKE TO DO	CAN WAIT

Must do refers to anything, including the things you really don't like doing (cleaning), but needs to be done. These are the only things that you need to consider during your big projects. Everything else can get shoved off on another to do list.

### Step 3: Address the project's needs

I put the project after your own needs because it's often more satisfying. In the real world, most of us jump straight to the project without acknowledging ourselves. I see that as a rather useless way to go about it since unless you're a workaholic with no life, it's not going to work that way. Acknowledging your own humanity and needs is a much healthier way to go about it.

Now that you've got yourself in order, get the project in order. Using either the project you came up with in module 1 or one of our pre-packaged projects, write down all that you'll need to do and get for your project to

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be a success. No particular order here (that's for the map in the next step), but just to make sure you brainstorm everything that you'll need to get the project done. This could be as simple as "get data, fill out report template" or as complicated as "get books from library, write report, get interview data..."

### Step 4: Making a map

In this step you're going to combine all the above into a nice little map that helps you walk through the project from start to finish and navigating the landmines of life. (Tip: If colours help you sort things, colour code the steps of the project and the personal things you need to navigate so you can tell at a glance what you should be doing.)



### After Action Review.

In this module we started overlapping our desires with the project at hand and started to look at how to move forward in life. I've found that our clients often have a hard time reconciling the two, but their clarity as for why comes in this AAR. I hope it opens up a new world for you, too.

1.) Did you find it difficult or easy to describe your motivations? Why or why not?

2.) Did your desires overlap with real expectations from the project? Why or why not?

3.) Are you satisfied with how the two worlds (your desires and the expectations for the project) mesh up? Why or why not?

4.) How does your preliminary map look? Is there anywhere you can simplify the map?

5.) What can you do to embrace chaos in your life?