# THE COMPANION WORKBOOK

JOHN BRIGGS

# Take Breaks, Work Better. The Companion Workbook

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Companion to Take Breaks, Work Better by John Briggs.

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# WELCOME. READ THIS FIRST.

*If you've already read Take Breaks, Work Better, this is your implementation companion. If you haven't, that's fine. The workbook stands on its own. (Even though buying and reading the book would be pretty sweet. All the cool kids are doing it.)*

## It's 2 a.m. and you're still at your desk

In 2011, I had a magic formula that hustle culture would be proud of. 5 a.m. to 9 a.m. on tax returns. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with clients. Then 5 p.m. to 2 a.m., back at the desk for more returns.

Basically, three workdays in twenty-four hours. Some people call it time manipulation. But whatever you call it, it made me feel like I was crushing it.

One night, I came home at 2 a.m. trying not to wake the kids and my very pregnant wife. But she was already awake. Waiting for me. I honestly thought that because I'd been so busy, maybe this meant she wanted to have an intimate moment with me. Except, she didn't have that type of smile on her face. In fact, she wasn't smiling at all. Instead, she flat out lost it. Giant tears, hyperventilating, snot crying. And the first thought in my head, I'm not proud of this, was: "Isn't it nice you have the luxury of a mental breakdown? If only I could afford that."

I didn't say it out loud. I waited.

Then she said: "I'm a single parent."

It hit like a throat-punch.

On our wedding day, I promised to be her constant companion. And I promised to give her my full support in raising our kids when she gave birth to our first. And there she was, broken, telling me she was alone.

Here's the quote that wouldn't leave my head:
**"No amount of success can compensate for failure in the home."**

I was sharing a roof with my family. But I wasn't sharing their life.
And by every visible hustle-culture metric, I was winning. Firm growing. Clients happy. I was doing it right.
Or was I? The most important relationships in my life were not winning.

# The core message of this workbook

Most of us have been sold this story: more hours equals more output. Grind equals growth. Rest is for the weak and you only get some if you've really earned that reward.

Every part of that is wrong.

Productivity science, the actual neuroscience of how attention works, says something else. The brain cycles between focus and distraction whether you like it or not. It cannot sustain peak output indefinitely, no matter how disciplined you think you are. Tired brains make more mistakes. Mistakes have to be reworked.

It took me years to figure this out.

**Take breaks to go faster. Focused blocks of work, followed by real recovery, build success and give you work-life harmony.**

# Why this workbook?

I'm a CPA. I run Incite Tax, a firm with more than 290 team members. I spend my days inside other people's businesses, looking at their P&Ls, their headcount, their margins, and the human cost behind those numbers.

I've watched founders run themselves into the ground for businesses that, on paper, looked fine. I've watched teams quietly check out because leadership wore exhaustion like a badge.

*Take Breaks, Work Better* is the book version of what I've learned. How to redesign your workday, and your team's, around how brains work. Not how 1926 industrial-era schedules told us they should.

This workbook provides you with tools from the book in an implementable easy to follow structure.

# The promise

By the time you finish this workbook, you will have

1) run two weeks of 3.3 blocks
2) identified your archetype
3) audited your time
4) mapped your true capacity
5) rolled the 3.3 Rule out to your team.

# Three proofs this is possible

### DAMON

One of my early readers. He restructured his lunch break. He left his desk, ate a legit meal, then walked his dog. The 2 p.m. crash he previously had, which he'd fought with candy bars for years just stopped happening. Twelve weeks in, he'd dropped twenty pounds, was more productive, and felt like a different person. All from one structural change to his day.

### LISA

A rock star at my firm. She got promoted, taking on extra responsibility, which ended up slowing her down for three weeks. Without the data, our instinct would have been to panic and hire someone. We would have second-guessed the promotion we gave her. The data told us to wait a second. She was on a learning curve, and still working under forty hours a week. So we waited. By week three she was back at full speed, laughing about how the new workload "wasn't really full-time after all."

### ME

After the 2 a.m. moment, I rebuilt my workday around the 3.3 Rule. Work up to three hours, then follow that by a 30% recovery break. The firm grew. I made it home for dinner. My kids stopped having a part-time father. Everything I'd told myself I had to grind for was, it turns out, more available once I stopped grinding.

# How To Use This Workbook

## Read it in order. The first time.

This workbook is built as a four-week action plan with a journal layer. The parts build on each other. Part 2 (Your Starter Week) only makes sense after Part 1 (Why). Part 6 (Team Rollout) only works after Parts 2 through 5, which is you running 3.3 on yourself first.

Once you've gone through it once, it will serve as a great reference guide and journal of what you've done.

Gurus and so called experts tell me that no one is capable of, nor do they want a four-week action plan. People's attention spans are too short these days. Well, I'm a contrarian. I don't like fluff. And everything in this workbook is designed to help you achieve the outcome you're seeking. I know you are willing to do the reps to make a change.

## The four-week arc

Each Part has a recommended week assignment so you can sequence it on the calendar:

| WEEK | PARTS YOU'LL WORK THROUGH | WHAT YOU'LL HAVE AT THE END OF THE WEEK |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Parts 1, 2, 3 | Your Starter Week run, focus profile identified, recovery breaks practiced |
| 2 | Parts 4, 5 | Your time audit complete, your true capacity visible on paper |
| 3 | Parts 6, 7 | Team rollout planned and underway, at least one diagnostic in motion |
| 4 | Parts 8, 9 + Journal | Remote setup dialed in, vision and commitments written, weekly log started |

## Can I jump around?

After the first pass, yes. Part 5 (Capacity) is the part most owners return to weekly. Part 7 (Struggling Team Member) is a diagnostic you'll pick up whenever someone on your team is on your mind. Part 8 (Remote) is for setting up a new remote employee or fixing a broken setup. The journal layer is for life.

Before the first pass, no. The order matters the first time around.

## Should I take breaks while doing this workbook?

**Yes. Obviously.**

The 3.3 Rule that you are learning how to apply still applies. Focus and do the work. No longer than 3 hours at a time. And follow that focus time with a break. Walk around. Look out a window. Come back.

If you're tempted to white-knuckle through this in one weekend afternoon….. that's exactly the pattern this workbook was built to break. Resist.

## What you'll need

- ☐ A calendar (digital, paper, whatever you'll open every day).
- ☐ A timer. Your phone is fine.
- ☐ A pen. This workbook is built to be written in.
- ☐ About thirty minutes for each Part on the first pass, and fifteen minutes a week for the journal layer after that.
- ☐ Honesty. The exercises don't work if you write what you think you should write instead of what's actually true.

**NOTE:** You don't need to have read the book to use this workbook. Each Part opens with context that re-establishes the teaching point, so the workbook stands alone. If you do have the book, you'll have more thorough data and examples. Both are designed to serve you. Both are designed to technically work without the other, even though both together are best.

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**Focus is a muscle. Recovery is fuel.**
**Awareness is a superpower.**

# WHY THE WAY YOU WORK ISN'T WORKING

Where you are in your journey:

***just starting.***

The goal of Part 1 isn't action yet. It's clarity.

By the end of this section, you'll see exactly what your current way of working is costing you, why it's structurally broken, and what the 3.3 Rule is offering as the alternative.

# The teaching point

The 8-hour workday isn't holy despite the world's addiction to its structure. It's a 1926 standard from Henry Ford, designed for assembly lines, consumer spending power, and worker morale during the industrial era. It was never optimized for how human brains function.

A century later, most of us still organize our work around this time container that was never designed to produce our best thinking. Then we layer hustle culture on top of it. "Grind harder." "Sleep when you're dead." "First one in, last one out." And we call the resulting exhaustion proof of our dedication.

## The research disagrees, emphatically:

> Vouchercloud found that office workers are genuinely productive for an average of **2 hours and 53 minutes per day**, despite being on the clock for 8.

> Princeton Neuroscience Institute research shows the brain naturally cycles between focus and distraction. A biological cycle you cannot negotiate with, the same way you can't negotiate with needing to use the bathroom.

> Dr. Alejandro Lleras at the University of Illinois has shown that periodic breaks sustain attention and prevent cognitive fatigue. The brain treats sustained focus the way muscles treat sustained tension. It needs recovery to keep producing.

Hustle culture isn't just unkind. It's structurally wrong about how output works.

**The 3.3 Rule: The most productive workday is up to 3 hours of focused work, followed by a recovery break of about 30% of that work time.**

That's the 3.3 Rule. One hour of work, twenty-minute break. Two hours of work, forty-minute break. Three hours of work, ninety-minute break. The exact ratio matters less than the principle. Focus block, then real recovery, then the next focus block.

It is the opposite of how most people structure their day. Which is exactly why most people's days aren't producing what they could.

# 1.1 The "what's it costing you" Audit

*Before any new framework can take hold, the cost of the current pattern has to be visible. That's the point of this exercise.*

In the last 90 days, which of these have you experienced personally?
*Check every one that applies. Every one!*

- ☐ Working evenings or weekends to catch up on what didn't fit in the workday.
- ☐ Skipping meals or eating at the desk.
- ☐ Lying in bed at midnight replaying conversations or unfinished tasks.
- ☐ Snapping at family, kids, or business partner, and then feeling guilty about it.
- ☐ Cancelling something personal (workout, dinner, kid's event) because of work.
- ☐ Wondering if you can keep this up for another year, let alone another decade.
- ☐ Feeling busy all day but unable to point to what you actually produced.
- ☐ Telling someone "I'm fine," when the truth was, "I'm close to empty."

**How many did you check?**

| 0-2 | 3-5 | 6+ |
|---|---|---|
| You're running healthier than most. Stay alert. | This is the territory the 3.3 Rule was built for. | This workbook is for you. Don't skim the rest of it. |

## What has the current pattern cost you so far?

*Be specific. Money lost. Health markers. A relationship. A goal that quietly slipped. Don't generalize here.*

## If you don't change anything, what does the next five years of this look like?

*Project it forward. The honest answer is rarely "the same." Usually it's worse, because the body, the team, and the marriage all have compounding effects.*

# 1.2 Identify The Belief That's In The Way

*Behind all of us is a foundation blueprint. Sometimes it was taught by a parent. Sometimes by an industry. Sometimes by a culture. Unless we identify it, it will run the show.*

## Which of these sounds like something you've told yourself?

- "If I'm not the hardest worker, I'll lose my edge."
- "My industry is just like this. Everyone burns out eventually."
- "If I take time off, things will fall apart."
- "Rest is what I get to do after the work is done."
- "I want my kids to see their dad was a really hard worker who knew how to grind."
- "The people who succeed are the ones who outwork everyone else."
- "I'll slow down once I hit ___ revenue, hire ___ people, or finish ___ project."
- Other. Write it in your own words:

## Now write the sentence that represents your foundational blueprint.

*One sentence. Plain. The one you'd say if no one were judging it.*

## Where did you learn it?

*A parent. A first boss. An industry. A book. A culture. It came from somewhere.*

# 1.3 The Shift

Naming the old blueprint is half the work. The other half is replacing it, because the brain abhors a vacuum and will reach for the old sentence again unless something specific is there to take its place. By the end of this exercise, you'll have a single replacement sentence written in your own words, ready to be the new default. The hustle-culture story isn't neutral. It's actively in the way of the work you want to do.

## Old blueprint

## Replacement blueprint

*Some examples for inspiration. "Recovery is part of the work, not a reward for finishing it." "The best version of me is more valuable than the most-hours version of me." "Excellence doesn't require exhaustion."* ***Now it's your turn. Write yours here.***

# You've completed Part 1. Your first win!

Most owners go an entire year without doing what you just did. The cost of how you've been working is now visible on paper, in your own handwriting. The belief that has been driving the pattern is named. And you've drafted the replacement. Hey! This is a big win. It's also a foundation the rest of this workbook can be built on.

> *Three things now exist on the page that didn't exist 30 minutes ago: a clear-eyed view of the cost, the belief that has been running you, and the sentence that replaces it. That's the first real win. The 3.3 Rule starts here, with awareness.*

Everything in the rest of this workbook is structure, tools, and tracking which will turn that replacement blueprint into how you will work more productively.

PRACTICE

*Before you move on: put this workbook down and do something un-work-related for **at least ten minutes.** The book teaches that recovery is what makes the next focus block possible. The workbook isn't a loophole. Practice the principle right here.*

# YOUR STARTER WEEK

Where you are in your journey:

***you've seen the cost of your current pattern and named the belief in the way.***

*Now it's time for the first real test. By the end of this section, you'll have a complete five-day Starter Week on the calendar and a Focus Profile in writing.*

The ultimate goal of the 3.3 Rule is to be so in tune with yourself that you don't need a timer, and that you know when you are focused and when you need a break. But most of us have been so entrenched in working all the hours that to start the tuning process, we need some initial training wheels to give us a starting point. That's what this starter week is. This Starter Week is a controlled experiment, five working days, to give you a starting point in discovering your own focus rhythm.

## Three things shape your individual rhythm:

**When is your brain sharpest?**
Some people are wired for morning deep work. Others need an hour to warm up and do their best thinking after 10. Some prefer the afternoon. There is no wrong answer here. Just the truth.

**What tasks give you energy versus drain it?**
An introvert in three hours of back-to-back client calls is working against their preference. An extrovert locked in solo deep work all morning is fighting theirs. There are so many daily tasks to choose from and some we enjoy and others not so much.

**How long can you actually stay focused?**
Some tasks make three hours feel like nothing. Others make 10 minutes feel like an hour.

After five days, while it's unlikely you'll know your Focus Profile, you will have an excellent foundation to start with. Your block lengths, your peak hours, your energy patterns, and your archetype. That profile becomes your baseline. It will evolve, of course. But you need a starting point.

**You can't optimize a rhythm you've never measured**

## The three archeytpes

There are three archetypes. We all have a preference. But based on job responsibilities and roles, we may not get to work with the preferred block all the time. However, it's still good for us to know which we are so we can try and pick it whenever possible.

**SPRINTER**
30-60 min blocks

**JOGGER**
60-120 min blocks

**MARATHONER**
90-180 min blocks

# 2.1 Pre-Week: Schedule Your Start Week

**BEFORE YOU SKIP THIS**

*If you're about to skip this because your calendar is too reactive for five protected days, read this first. The Starter Week is not a guarantee that nothing will interrupt you. It's a baseline experiment. It also doesn't change the work that you are already planning or needing to do. It's simply restructuring the hours on how you get the work done. If two of the fifteen blocks get blown up by something real, you still have thirteen blocks of data. Far more than you have right now. Running an imperfect version is better than not doing anything.*

## Your Starter Week. What to block.

**Pick the week.**
Next Monday is ideal. If that week is genuinely impossible (a major deadline, a vacation, a family crisis), pick the next workable Monday. Don't pick a "quieter" future week that doesn't exist.

**Treat the focus blocks like client appointments.**
They are not "if I have time." They are on the calendar so honor it.

**Follow the starter week format below.**

## Block this on the calendar.

| Day | BLOCK 1 (time) | BLOCK 2 (time) | BLOCK 3 (time) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Monday | 1 hr + 20 min break | 2 hr + 40 min break | 3 hr + 60 min break |
| Tuesday | 2 hr + 40 min break | 1 hr + 20 min break | 3 hr + 60 min break |
| Wednesday | 3 hr + 60 min break | 2 hr + 40 min break | 1 hr + 20 min break |
| Thursday | 2 hr + 40 min break | 3 hr + 60 min break | 1 hr + 20 min break |
| Friday | 1 hr + 20 min break | 3 hr + 60 min break | 2 hr + 40 min break |

# 2.2 The Daily Log

The Starter Week only produces useful data if you capture what you notice while it's still fresh. By the end of the week, you'll have five days of in-the-moment observations. When your focus was sharpest. What broke it. What you actually produced. Instead of a vague feeling of how the week went. The book's argument is that focus rhythm is unique to each person. This daily log is how you gather the data so that you don't have to guess.

> At the end of each day during your Starter Week, fill in one row. Don't do all five at the end of the week from memory. The point is the in-the-moment debrief.

## Monday - Daily Log

| Question | Answer |
|---|---|
| Time of day my focus broke down | |
| Tasks that drained my focus fastest | |
| Tasks that I stayed in flow on | |
| What I actually produced today | |
| How I felt at the end of day (1-10) | |

## Tuesday - Daily Log

| Question | Answer |
|---|---|
| Time of day my focus broke down | |
| Tasks that drained my focus fastest | |
| Tasks that I stayed in flow on | |
| What I actually produced today | |
| How I felt at the end of day (1-10) | |

## Wednesday - Daily Log

| Question | Answer |
|---|---|
| Time of day my focus broke down | |
| Tasks that drained my focus fastest | |
| Tasks that I stayed in flow on | |
| What I actually produced today | |
| How I felt at the end of day (1-10) | |

## Thursday - Daily Log

| Question | Answer |
|---|---|
| Time of day my focus broke down | |
| Tasks that drained my focus fastest | |
| Tasks that I stayed in flow on | |
| What I actually produced today | |
| How I felt at the end of day (1-10) | |

## Friday - Daily Log

| Question | Answer |
|---|---|
| Time of day my focus broke down | |
| Tasks that drained my focus fastest | |
| Tasks that I stayed in flow on | |
| What I actually produced today | |
| How I felt at the end of day (1-10) | |

# 2.3 Your Focus Profile

Now we want to take the five daily observations and create a single, usable summary. By the end of this exercise, you'll have one page that captures your peak hours, your natural block length, your archetype, your energy-giving tasks, and your energy-drainers. This gives you a great foundation to start on and to make tweaks to as you continue to live the 3.3 life.

*After the five days are complete, fill this in. This is the baseline. It will change over time and that's ok.*

## My peak focus window

*The block of the day when I'm consistently sharpest.*

## My energy-giving tasks

*The ones I could stay in flow on the longest.*

## My natural block length

*The duration where I can stay genuinely focused without forcing it. Different tasks may have different answers.*

## My energy-draining tasks

*The ones that broke my focus fastest, regardless of time of day.*

## My Archetype

*Based on what you observed during the Starter Week:*

□ Sprinter. 30-60 min blocks work best.
□ Jogger. 60-120 min blocks work best.
□ Marathoner. 90-180 min blocks work best.
□ Mixed. Different archetypes for different task types (write it out below).

## One adjustment I'm making for Week 2

*Based on what I learned. Block length, time of day, task sequencing, or recovery break design. Pick one.*

# You've completed Part 2.

If you actually ran the Starter Week, and didn't just read about it, you've given yourself a precious gift. You have a baseline. A measured rhythm. A profile. And you've already proven to yourself that some version of the 3.3 Rule works for you, even if the exact parameters are still being tuned.

Focus blocks alone aren't the whole rule. We also have the ".3" of the rule we need to talk about. How to take the break. What do you do during the break.

PRACTICE

*Before you move on: schedule your full second week of 3.3 blocks right now, before you close this workbook. Based on your second week on your profile. If you still aren't sure, it's ok if you run the Starter Week format again, but you should have enough data to at least make adjustments to the Starter Week format.*

**Focus is a muscle.**
**The Starter Week was your first real workout.**

# HOW TO TAKE A REAL BREAK

Where you are in your journey:
*focus blocks are on your calendar. Most people think they know how to take a break. They don't. By the end of this section, you'll know how to do it properly.*

Taking a real break is a skill. It has to be learned and practiced, like any other part of how you work.

Most of what we call "breaks" are not recovery. They're distractions that keep our brain with a cognitive load. Not restorative at all. Scrolling your phone for fifteen minutes or an hour is not a break. Switching from a hard task to an easier task is not a break. Eating lunch at your desk while answering Slack messages is definitely not a break.

The brain knows the difference. It just doesn't bother telling you in language you can hear over the dopamine or grind.

**A real break disengages the same circuits you used during the focus block.**

## Good break

**MOVE**

*Your hands or your feet are busy and your head is free.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Walk around the block, no phone | Neck rolls and shoulder rolls |
| Write in a journal | Build something with Legos |
| Walk to get water and take the long way | Touch your toes and hang there |
| Write down everything on your mind | Whittle |
| Walk up and down a flight of stairs | Ten minutes of easy yoga |
| Work on a jigsaw puzzle | Sand a piece of wood |
| Walk the dog | Foam roll your back |
| Walk in the rain on purpose | Sharpen a knife |
| Step outside | Play with the dog |
| Light stretching at your desk | Clear off your desk surface |
| Work with clay or putty | Get on the floor and play with your kid |
| Practice an instrument | Wash the dishes by hand |

| | |
|---|---|
| Fold laundry | Wipe down the counter |
| Sing in the car | Doodle on paper |
| Sweep the floor | Water the plants |
| Sing karaoke with friends | Sketch whatever is in front of you |
| Make the bed | Repot a plant |
| Dance | Color |
| Cross stitch | Pull weeds |
| Knit or crochet | Shuffle a deck of cards |

**STOP**

*Your body stops, your nervous system drops out of go mode.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Stand in the sun with your eyes closed | Have lunch with somebody outisde of work |
| Sauna | Sit in your car in silence |
| Sit on the front steps and do nothing | Hug somebody |
| Drink a full glass of water sitting down | Close your eyes for five minutes |
| Sit in the grass | Laugh at something |
| Make tea and drink it doing nothing else | A less than 20-minute nap |
| Take your shoes off and stand in the grass | Listen to comedians |
| Eat lunch away from your desk or outside | Put your feet up |
| Sit by water | Tell somebody a story |
| Eat protein instead of sugar | Leave the phone in another room |
| Watch birds | Listen to instrumental music with eyes closed |
| Sit with the cat in your lap | Ten slow breaths |
| Look out a window at something far away | Listen to music |
| Call somebody you like | Box breathing |
| Lie on the floor and stare at the ceiling | Flip through a photo book |
| Sit with a coworker and don't talk about work | Guided meditation Stare at nothing on purpose |
| Lie in a hammock | Massage gun on your shoulders and legs |

## Bad break

**STILL WORKING**

*Different task, same energy being used by your brain. You never left output mode.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Checking email real quick | Watching a webinar |
| Finishing the email you were mid-sentence on | Grocery shopping |
| Clearing your inbox | Watching a YouTube tutorial |
| Reviewing somebody's work | The post office |
| Answering one Slack message | Reading a business book |
| Answering a team member's question | Booking travel |
| Reading Teams threads you were not tagged in | Reading industry newsletters |
| Solving somebody else's problem | Comparing flight prices |
| Checking your phone for notifications | Researching a competitor |
| Taking a quick call | Browsing Amazon |
| Checking your revenue dashboard | Studying a competitor's website |
| Taking an unscheduled meeting | Reading product reviews before a purchase |
| Checking your bank balance | Googling yourself |
| A walking meeting where you talk about work | Comparison shopping |
| Checking your website analytics | Reading your reviews |
| Coffee with a client | Dealing with a home repair |
| Checking how your last post performed | Reading the one-star review again |
| Returning voicemails | Calling a contractor |
| Checking stock prices | Rewriting your LinkedIn headline |
| Calling the insurance company | Paying bills |
| Checking your financial portfolio | Drafting a post in your head |
| Calling the bank | Checking your credit score |
| Listening to a business podcast | Planning tomorrow's schedule |
| Disputing a charge | Scrolling Zillow |
| Listening to a leadership audiobook | Reorganizing your task list |
| Running errands | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Eating lunch while answering email | Renaming files |
| Re-prioritizing your priorities | Rehearsing a hard conversation in your head |
| Eating over the sink in ninety seconds | Tweaking a spreadsheet |
| Cleaning up the CRM | One more thing on the task you walked away from |
| Skipping the meal and working through it | Fast food between calls |
| Filing documents | |

**FEELS LIKE ESCAPE**

*You switched gear to something not work related, and it feels safe because you do these on your time off.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Scrolling any form of social media | Listening to a news podcast |
| Nicotine for the buzz | Watching a game you have money on |
| Doomscrolling the news | Anything longer than a 20-minute nap |
| Competitive online gaming | Binge-watching a plot-heavy show |
| Reading the comments | A sugary coffee drink |
| A mobile game with a leaderboard | Starting a movie you cannot finish |
| Arguing in the comments | An energy drink |
| A sports betting app | Texting somebody you are in conflict with |
| Watching cable news | Your fourth cup of coffee |
| Adjusting your fantasy lineup | Venting about a coworker |
| A drink at lunch, as in alcohol | Chips at your desk |
| | Calling somebody to complain |

# 3.1 Your Current Break Inventory

By the end of this exercise, you'll have a clear list of what you've been calling "breaks," and a verdict on each one as real recovery or distraction in disguise. The book's argument here is direct. The brain knows the difference between recovery and further stimulus. It’s our job to listen to the signals.

> *Be honest about what you've actually been calling breaks. The first step to real recovery is naming the substitutes.*

## In the last week, what have you been calling breaks?

*List them. All of them. The phone-scroll counts. The "quick check on email" counts.*

## Which of those were real recovery, and which were distraction in disguise?

*List them. All of them. The phone-scroll counts. The "quick check on email" counts.*

# 3.2 The “I don’t have time” Objection

The most common reason readers quit on recovery breaks is the feeling that their workload doesn't permit them the luxury of the break. The reality is that attempting to work when your brain is in a natural state of not being able to focus (which happens), is that your work is garbage.

This will require extra time when you discover the mistake you are currently making while trying to push through your inability to focus. Skipping the break costs more than taking it, in every measurable way.

### What's the work you're skipping breaks to get to?

### In the last 90 days, what work did you have to redo because the first version was tired, sloppy, or low-focus?

### Roughly how many hours did the rework cost you?

# 3.3 Design Your Break Menu

Recovery defaults to whatever is easiest in the moment, and the easiest thing is usually the phone. By the end of this exercise, you'll have a pre-decided menu of short and long break options, plus an explicit "absolutely not" list. So when the focus block ends, the next twenty minutes don't go to whichever app loaded first. The book is clear that a real break is one that disengages the same circuits the focus block used. The creation of this menu will make that intentional.

> *We don't want to leave recovery to chance. Pre-decide. When the focus block ends, you should not be deciding what to do with the next twenty minutes. You should already know.*

## My short break menu (10-20 minutes)

*Pick 3-5 real options. Stretching, walking, water, breathing, looking out a window, calling a friend, lying on the floor for ten minutes. Anything that disengages from the screen.*

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

## My long break menu (30-90 minutes)

*For longer recovery between bigger focus blocks. Real meal away from the desk, walk outside, workout, nap, deep conversation.*

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

### My "absolutely not" list during breaks

The things that will sabotage recovery if you let them. Email, Slack, news, social, work-adjacent reading. Name them so you can recognize the temptation when it comes.

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

# 3.4 The Break Ritual

The word ritual comes with a certain weight of intensity. I'm using it on purpose because I want to make this point: knowing when to take a break shouldn't be as intense as the feeling of some type of ritual. The goal is to be in tune to your body and focus awareness to know when that break should be. The 3.3 Rule isn't a rigid structure where you need to set timers.

In the beginning, as you develop the habit, it's ok to use timers as training wheels, but over time you don't want to use the timers unless you habitually go over 3 hours of continuous effort. So this isn't really an exercise. It's just a very important point I wanted to make.

# You've completed Part 3.

You now have the second half of the 3.3 Rule on paper. Designed specifically for your own 3.3 Rule system. A menu of real recovery options, and a clear list of bad-break habits to avoid.

Most people skip this entirely. They build the focus blocks and leave the breaks to chance. That's exactly the design failure that makes the whole system collapse within two weeks.

PRACTICE

*Before you move on: take one of the breaks on your menu right now. Not after this paragraph. Now. Stand up, walk away, do it for at least ten minutes, then come back to Part 4.*

**Focus is a muscle.**
**Recovery is fuel. Don't neglect the fuel.**

# AUDIT YOUR TIME

Where you are in your journey:
*you've built focus blocks and real recovery breaks into your week, and you know how to take a good break. Now you turn the lens on what's inside the focus blocks. By the end of this section, you'll know exactly where your time is actually going, and what to do, delegate, or delete.*

The 3.3 Rule optimizes how you focus. The time audit optimizes what you focus on. They're different problems with different solutions, but necessary to do both for true productivity improvement.

We are often so busy, that we rarely take time to consider if the work we are doing should be done by us in the first place. Focus blocks improve productivity. Proper prioritizing and task selection takes you to the next level.

We do this at Incite Tax often. But when we ran a time audit at Incite Tax the first time, my tax professionals were spending 30% or more of their time on tasks that did not require their expertise. The moment we delegated those tasks, their revenue-generating output per hour went up.

**Clarity is one of the most profitable things a business owner can cultivate.**

# 4.1 The 5-day Time Log

Track every working activity for one full week. Use 30-minute increments. Honesty matters here. So does precision. Saying I wrote content for 3 hours is not helpful. How many pieces of content did you write? Or how many words did you write? Or how many client pieces of content were created? Please fill this out during the day. Not retroactively.

> **BEFORE YOU SKIP THIS** If logging every 30 minutes feels like surveillance you don't want to inflict on yourself, that's exactly why this works. The discomfort is the data. You're about to learn that 40% of the time you thought went to client work went to email triage, or that the "quick admin tasks" between meetings ate up three hours. And it’s only for a week. I’m not asking you to do this all the time, every day.

## Daily Time Log

The daily logs here can just as easily be tracked on a google sheet. Use the method that is easiest for you to track.

## Day 1

| Time | What I actually did |
|---|---|
| 7:00 | |
| 7:30 | |
| 8:00 | |
| 8:30 | |
| 9:00 | |
| 9:30 | |
| 10:00 | |
| 10:30 | |
| 11:00 | |
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## Day 2

| Time | What I actually did |
|---|---|
| 7:00 | |
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## Day 3

| Time | What I actually did |
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| 7:00 | |
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| 9:00 | |
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## Day 4

| Time | What I actually did |
|---|---|
| 7:00 | |
| 7:30 | |
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## Day 5

| Time | What I actually did |
|---|---|
| 7:00 | |
| 7:30 | |
| 8:00 | |
| 8:30 | |
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# 4.2 Done, Delegated, Deleted

A time log shows where the hours went. Now we want to take the time to analyze those tasks and decide if we should have done them or not.

> *Looking at the list of things you did, put them in the appropriate column. Most owners can delegate or delete 30-40% of what they're doing if they're honest about it. Knowing what you should have done is a great step toward awareness.*

## The filter, in plain English

- **DONE** = only you could have done this. It's revenue-generating, strategic, or genuinely requires your expertise or authority.
- **DELEGATED** = someone else should have done this. Maybe not as fast right now, but they will be after a month of doing it consistently.
- **DELETED** = nobody should be doing this. It exists because of legacy, inertia, or fear of letting go. If you stopped doing it tomorrow, nothing would break.

| DONE<br>Only you could have done it. | DELEGATED<br>Someone else should have done it. | DELETED<br>Nobody should have done it. |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

### For each DELEGATED item: who and by when?

| Task | Who it's going to | By when | Handoff plan |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

# 4.3 The Eisenhower Matrix For The Items Still On Your Plate

The Done, Delegated, Deleted, exercise was about the past activities. Now we want to focus on the things you still have on your plate. By the end of this exercise, your remaining tasks will be sorted by urgent vs. important. Most owners spend their best hours putting out Quadrant 1 or Quadrant 3 fires while the highest-leverage Quadrant 2 work, the work that prevents the next fire, never gets a calendar slot.

| | URGENT | NOT URGENT |
|---|---|---|
| IMPORTANT | **Quadrant 1. Do now**<br>Crises, deadlines, pressing problems. Schedule into a focus block today. | **Quadrant 2. Schedule**<br>High-leverage strategic work. Where the highest ROI lives. Defend this on the calendar. |
| NOT IMPORTANT | **Quadrant 3. Delegate**<br>Looks urgent, isn't important to you. Hand it off. | **Quadrant 4. Delete**<br>Time sucks. Cut. |

# 4.4. The End-Of-Block Question

Time logs are retrospective. This question is the in-the-moment discipline that keeps focus blocks honest. By the end of this exercise, you'll have practiced a single closing question, "What did I actually produce?" Hours worked is the wrong unit of measurement. What-was-produced is the only one that compounds.

*After every focus block from now on, ask yourself one question.*

## What did I actually produce?

Not how many hours did I work. Not how busy did I look. Not how many things did I touch. What did I actually produce? What exists now that didn't exist before I sat down?

### Try it now. For the most recent focus block you ran.

### Try it for the focus block you ran the day before.

### Anything surprise you?

# You've completed Part 4.

You now know where your time has actually been going, what you should do, schedule, delegate or delete.

The next step is to stack everything you have left across your real available capacity, and see whether the math works.

PRACTICE

*Before you move on: pick one DELEGATE item and send the handoff message right now. Not today. Now. The delegate column is just a dream until you actually delegate it.*

**The 3.3 Rule optimizes how you focus.**
**The audit optimizes what you focus on.**

# SEE YOUR TRUE CAPACITY

Where you are in your journey:
*you've cleared the calendar of work that doesn't belong on it. Now you check whether what's left actually fits mathematically. By the end of this section, you'll know your true weekly capacity and where the overcommitment is hiding.*

In the early days of running Incite Tax, I said yes to every client. Need your taxes done? Absolutely. Need it yesterday? No problem. I had no idea what my actual capacity was.

Overcommitment is almost never caused by carelessness. It's caused by lack of visibility. You take on new work based on want-to, not can-do. By the time the math catches up with you (missed deadlines, exhausted team, frustrated clients), you're already deep in the mess.

**You cannot pour two gallons into a one-gallon container. Know your capacity before you commit.**

## The four-step capacity process

You can run this as often as you would like. Two boundaries I'll give you on this. More than weekly is overkill. And don't go longer than a quarter without doing it again. Here are the steps.

1. **List all active projects and their required total hours.** Be honest. Most people underestimate by 20-40%.
2. **Calculate the size of your container.** How many hours of focus time will you have in the upcoming weeks? Any vacations planned? Any emergencies requiring more than normal hours?
3. **Assign project hours to specific weeks.** Notice I didn't say 3.3 blocks. Roughly blocking out 3.3 focus blocks for the week is fine. But more than that and it's a waste of energy. You can't possibly know, with all the factors that affect our ability to focus, how you are going to feel in a week.
4. **If the math doesn't work, something moves.** Three options: move the deadline, delegate the work, or renegotiate the scope. Pick one. Before you commit to it, not after.

# 5.1 Active Project List

*Every active project or engagement. Include anything in progress or starting within the next eight weeks. Include who owns each one.*

| Project/Engagement | Total hrs | Hrs/wk | Deadline | Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | ☐ On track ☐ At risk ☐ Behind |
| | | | | ☐ On track ☐ At risk ☐ Behind |
| | | | | ☐ On track ☐ At risk ☐ Behind |
| | | | | ☐ On track ☐ At risk ☐ Behind |
| | | | | ☐ On track ☐ At risk ☐ Behind |
| | | | | ☐ On track ☐ At risk ☐ Behind |

## Which projects on this list have unclear scope?

*These are your highest risk items. You genuinely don't know how many hours remain. Take the time to get a better idea of the remaining time commitment.*

# 5.2 Weekly Capacity Calculator

Run this calculation before the start of each week. Five minutes. It will save you the consequences of committing to more than the calendar can hold.

***BEFORE YOU SKIP THIS*** *If you're about to skip this and tell yourself you'll do it later, be honest: when was the last time you ran a real capacity check before saying yes to a project? Five minutes now will save a missed deadline or a 60-hour week later. The owners who keep their commitments are the ones who do this math before they commit, not after.*

| Calculation | Your Number |
|---|---|
| **TOTAL available focus hours this week = add up all your scheduled focus blocks.** | |
| Total project hours required this week (sum from project list). | |
| Buffer to keep free for unplanned work (recommend 10-20%). | |
| **NET available focus hours. Total hours minus buffer hours.** | |
| **AM I OVERCOMMITTED? (required > net available).** | □ Yes. Something has to move<br>□ No. Math works. |

## If you are overcommitted right now. What specifically moves?

Be specific. "Sort it out" is not a plan. Name the project, the action, who it goes to, and by when.

# 5.3 Eight-Week Gantt Chart

Plot each project across the next eight weeks. Shade or mark the cells where work is actively happening. Use D to mark deadline weeks. Use △ to mark milestones. The visual is the whole point. Individual projects look fine in isolation. It's the overlap that reveals the truth.

Week 1 starts:_____

Key: ■ = active work D = deadline △ = milestone

| Project | W1 | W2 | W3 | W4 | W5 | W6 | W7 | W8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
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## Which weeks are the most congested or have zero buffer?

Where do the most projects overlap? These are your pressure weeks. The ones where a single unexpected delay cascades into everything else. Consider moving things.

# 5.4 The Honest Conversation List

Overcommitment is not solved by working harder. It's solved by having honest conversations early. A client told before a deadline is missed a client who can adjust. A client told after is a client who loses trust.

### Which client or stakeholder needs a timeline conversation this week?

### Is there a "yes" you said recently that the calendar cannot support?

Write it down. Identify what needs to happen to address it. Move the deadline, delegate the work, or renegotiate the scope.

### What's one commitment you'll stop making until you have clear capacity for it?

This could be a type of project, a minimum lead time, or a scope boundary you'll enforce.

# You've completed Part 5.

Two weeks in. You know your focus rhythm. You take real recovery breaks. You've audited what should be on your plate. And you now have a clarity of whether your remaining work actually fits.

The next four parts apply everything to the people who work for you.

PRACTICE

*Before you move on: run the weekly capacity calculator above with this week's real numbers. If the math says overcommitted, make one decision about what moves before moving to the next part.*

**Know your capacity. Honor your commitments.**
**Have the honest conversation early.**

# ROLL OUT THE 3.3 RULE TO YOUR TEAM

Where you are in your journey:
*you've tuned your own instrument. Now it's time to tune the orchestra. By the end of this section, you'll have an honest read on your team's current state, a rollout plan that lands without resistance, and a scorecard that measures what matters.*

Most people don't like change. The change you've made with the implementation of the 3.3 Rule started with your own desire for change. Your team may not have that same desire. To improve our chances of no team pushback, we recommend framing the roll out like an experiment with willing scientists. The owners who do it well frame it as a one-month pilot, give the skeptics a role in the experiment, model it themselves, and let the data make the case.

**People buy in to what they help build.**

# 6.1 Read The Room

*Burnout is the #1 reason people leave jobs. It's tempting to call the signs laziness. Most of the time, it's exhaustion. Before planning the rollout, take an honest look at where your team actually is right now.*

### Which of these signs are currently showing in your team?

- □ Apathy replacing engagement
- □ More eye rolls than initiative
- □ Slower turnaround times
- □ Quality dropping on work they used to nail
- □ Simple requests becoming drama
- □ Complaints about being overwhelmed
- □ People leaving or talking about leaving
- □ You're doing their job because it's faster

### What has that cost your business so far?

Think missed deadlines, staff turnover, client experience, your own energy spent managing it.

_____

_____

_____

### On a scale of 1-10, how urgent is it to make a change in how your team works?

1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10 □

# 6.2 Your Team Roster And Archetypes

*If you think about your business as an orchestra, not everyone on your team plays the same instrument. Map your team before the rollout so you can customize the approach by the role of each team member. Your team member may have a different preference, but we've found doing the pre-work on the rollout based on role can sometimes identify obvious mismatches of team with role.*

**SPRINTER**
**30-60 min blocks**
*Receptionists, support staff, customer-facing roles, high-frequency task roles.*

**JOGGER**
**60-120 min blocks**
*Blended roles mixing reactive and proactive work. Group similar tasks.*

**MARATHONER**
**90-180 min blocks**
*Analysts, writers, tax preparers, strategists, developers.*

## Team Roster

*Fill in your team. Estimate the archetype based on the role. You'll refine after the pilot. Add rows or copy the table for larger teams.*

| # | Name | Role | Archetype (estimate) | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | □ Sprinter □ Jogger □ Marathoner | |
| 2 | | | □ Sprinter □ Jogger □ Marathoner | |
| 3 | | | □ Sprinter □ Jogger □ Marathoner | |
| 4 | | | □ Sprinter □ Jogger □ Marathoner | |
| 5 | | | □ Sprinter □ Jogger □ Marathoner | |
| 6 | | | □ Sprinter □ Jogger □ Marathoner | |
| 7 | | | □ Sprinter □ Jogger □ Marathoner | |
| 8 | | | □ Sprinter □ Jogger □ Marathoner | |
| 9 | | | □ Sprinter □ Jogger □ Marathoner | |
| 10 | | | □ Sprinter □ Jogger □ Marathoner | |

# 6.3 Plan the rollout

Five decisions to make before you announce anything to the team. Don't drop the 3.3 Rule like a surprise fire drill.

## Decision 1: Frame it as a pilot, not a policy.

Your kickoff sentence (write it out as you would actually say it). Use language like "we're running a one-month experiment." Not "effective Monday, we're implementing."

## Decision 2: Who is your most likely skeptic?

Every team has one. The eye-roller. The "this won't work here" person. Don't try to convince them. Invite them to track the results. Invite them to suggest how you frame it to the rest of the team.

## How will you give that skeptic a measurement role?

Tracking output? Reviewing the scorecard? Suggesting break activities? People buy in to what they help build.

## Decision 3: How long is the pilot?

Recommended: one month. Long enough for the data to be real. Short enough that nobody feels trapped.

- ☐ 2 weeks
- ☐ 1 month (recommended)
- ☐ Other: _____

## Decision 4: When and how will you review results with the team?

Date and format. Group meeting? One-on-ones? Written summary? Make it concrete. Neither method is necessarily better than another. Pick the method you think will resonate most with your team.

_____

_____

_____

## Decision 5: How will you model it yourself?

If you announce the 3.3 Rule Monday and sneak emails into your break blocks by Wednesday, you have proved the whole thing is performative. The team is always watching. What specifically will they see you doing?

_____

_____

_____

# 6.4 Objection-Handling Scripts

Five objections you will almost certainly hear during the rollout. Each comes with a script you can adapt in your own voice.

## 1: "I don't have time for breaks."

What they really mean: "My workload feels overwhelming, and breaks will get me even further behind."

**The move:** Don't argue the logic. Show them the numbers. Ask what they had to redo last week because the first attempt was tired or sloppy. That rework is the cost of skipping breaks. The break would have saved them time.

**Script:** "I hear you. Let me ask. What work this week did you have to redo because the first version wasn't quite right? The rework is the cost of not taking the break. The rework is lost time you could have had to work on your to do list. Let's test that for a month and see what the numbers say."

## 2: "I can't stop now, I'm in the zone."

What they really mean: "I've confused intensity with output, and I'm worried the zone won't come back."

**The move:** Acknowledge that the zone is real. The zone also ends. And they also aren't used to it coming back because they never take a rest to reset their brain. That's the point of the 3.3 Rule.

**Script:** "The zone is real. I'm not trying to take it from you. The zone always ends though, and you're afraid it won't come back because your experience is that it doesn't. At least not until another day. The break gives you the ability to get in the zone for every focus block. Let's test what your second focus block looks like with a real recovery between them versus without. The data will settle this faster than the argument will."

### 3: "Our industry is just like this."

What they really mean: "How are we going to stay in business if all our other competitors aren't taking breaks?" or "I really don't want to make a change. Let's just keep things status quo."

**The move:** Don't debate the industry. It's not worth the effort. Reassure them the length of the experiment won't be long enough to ruin the company.

**Script:** "You're probably right that this won't work in our industry. But we'd like to see if it can and luckily, we are just trying this out for a month to see what the data says. That's not enough time to fall behind our competitors."

### 4: "If I take breaks, my work won't get done."

What they really mean: "I'm worried my workload is too heavy and I'll be punished if I appear to slow down.

**The move:** This is often a real signal about workload, not about breaks. Listen for it. Sometimes the right answer isn't "take more breaks" but "let me help you re-prioritize the list."

**Script:** "If breaks would mean missing real commitments, let's look at the list together. We may have a workload problem hiding behind the breaks problem. Bring me the list this week and we'll go through it together."

### 5: "This sounds nice for some roles, but mine is different."

What they really mean: "I'm worried this is a one-size-fits-all that doesn't respect what my job actually requires."

**The move:** Validate it. The receptionist and the strategist don't run the same day. That's the point of the archetypes. Different roles, different block structures.

**Script:** "You're right. The salesperson's day isn't the admin's day. That's why this isn't a single schedule. It's a framework. Let's talk about what your day actually looks like and figure out what version of focus blocks makes sense for your role."

# 6.5 The Pilot Scorecard

*Run this weekly during the pilot. Don't track something just because it's trackable. Track what actually tells the business's story.*

| Metric | Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
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## Which 2-3 metrics matter most for your business right now?

Write them here so the team is focused on what actually tells the story.

## What does winning look like at the end of the pilot?

Be specific. What would you need to see to call this a success?

# You've completed Part 6.

You have a rollout plan. You know who your skeptic is and what role they're going to play in measuring it. You have scripts for the objections you're going to hear. You have a scorecard with specific numbers attached to what winning looks like.

Now you run the pilot. The data will say more than any speech you give about why this matters.

PRACTICE

*Before you move on: schedule the kickoff conversation with your team. Open the calendar right now. Block the time. The pilot only starts when the meeting is on the calendar.*

**People buy in to what they help build.**
**Run it as an experiment, not a mandate.**

# THE STRUGGLING TEAM MEMBER

Where you are in your journey:
*the company wide rollout is underway. Now you handle the team members who, even with the new framework, aren't performing. By the end of this section, you'll have a diagnostic for every struggling person on your team and a clear next step for each of them.*

Not every performance problem is a 3.3 Rule problem. The most expensive management mistake is applying the wrong solution to the wrong diagnosis. When a team member is underperforming, after the rollout or just generally, there are only three root causes. Getting the diagnosis right is everything. The response is completely different depending on which one you're dealing with.

Remember Lisa. Rock star. Got promoted, absorbed extra responsibility, and slowed down for three weeks. Without the data and the 3.3 mindset, the instinct would have been to panic. Assume we were understaffed. Hire someone. Second-guess the promotion. The data said she was on a learning curve so we waited. By week three she was back to full speed.

Patience was the right call that time. It isn't always. The only way to know is to let the data tell the story.

**A team that performs is built on clarity, data, and structure.**

## The three diagnoses

When someone on your team is on your mind, walk through these three first. Before any conversation, before any decision.

> *The answer is always in the data. Patience is sometimes right. A personnel decision is sometimes right. The only way to know, and to make that decision with confidence, is to let the metrics tell the story. Don't make irreversible decisions on gut feeling.*

### FOCUS FATIGUE

***The 3.3 Rule CAN fix this.***

**Signs:** Performance dropped over time, not immediately. Quality varies by time of day. Shows genuine exhaustion. Responds quickly to structure and recovery.

**Response:** Implement 3.3 blocks. Protect breaks. Give it 2-3 weeks before drawing conclusions.

### ROLE/ SKILL MISMATCH

***The 3.3 Rule CANNOT fix this.***

**Signs:** Performance always inconsistent in specific areas. Training doesn't move the needle. Thrives in other tasks but not core responsibilities.

**Response:** Have an honest conversation about role fit. Reassign or restructure before exiting.

### MOTIVATION PROBLEM

***The 3.3 Rule will EXPOSE this.***

**Signs:** Inconsistent performance regardless of time of day or task. Does the minimum consistently. When given structure, output doesn't improve.

**Response:** Let the data speak. Structured blocks make it impossible to hide in busyness. The data will confirm what you suspect.

# 7.1. Diagnostic Form Per Team Member

Complete one diagnostic form per struggling team member. The first one is laid out in full. There are two more for additional team members.

> ***BEFORE YOU SKIP THIS*** *If you're thinking "I already know what's wrong with this person, I don't need to fill out a form," that's the exact instinct that gets owners into expensive personnel mistakes. Your gut may be right. The form will confirm it. The form will also catch the cases where your gut is wrong (the Lisa story). Ten minutes of writing it down beats ten months of a team member mismatch.*

# Team Member 1

Name:_____Role:_____How long have they been in this role?:_____

**Diagnostic questions:** answer each. The pattern across the answers points to the diagnosis.

| Diagnostic question | Your answer/observation |
|---|---|
| When did the performance issue start? Recently, or has it always been this way? | |
| Is performance worse at specific times of day? | |
| Does quality vary depending on the type of task, or is it consistently low across all tasks? | |
| Has this person responded to previous feedback, structure, or training? | |
| Has their output declined over time, or has it always been inconsistent in specific areas? | |
| When given structure and clear expectations, does their output improve, or stay the same? | |
| In what tasks or contexts do they shine? | |

## My diagnosis

- □ Focus Fatigue. Implement 3.3 structure, protect breaks, give it 2-3 weeks.
- □ Role / Skill Mismatch. Have role-fit conversation, reassign or restructure.
- □ Motivation Problem. Let data speak through structured blocks.
- □ Unclear. Need more data points before deciding.

## Specific next step for Team Member 1

Not a vague intention. A concrete action, a date, and who needs to be involved.

_____

_____

_____

_____

# Team Member 2

Name:_____Role:_____How long have they been in this role?:_____

**Diagnostic questions:** answer each. The pattern across the answers points to the diagnosis.

| Diagnostic question | Your answer/observation |
|---|---|
| When did the performance issue start? Recently, or has it always been this way? | |
| Is performance worse at specific times of day? | |
| Does quality vary depending on the type of task, or is it consistently low across all tasks? | |
| Has this person responded to previous feedback, structure, or training? | |
| Has their output declined over time, or has it always been inconsistent in specific areas? | |
| When given structure and clear expectations, does their output improve, or stay the same? | |
| In what tasks or contexts do they shine? | |

## My diagnosis

- □ Focus Fatigue. Implement 3.3 structure, protect breaks, give it 2-3 weeks.
- □ Role / Skill Mismatch. Have role-fit conversation, reassign or restructure.
- □ Motivation Problem. Let data speak through structured blocks.
- □ Unclear. Need more data points before deciding.

## Specific next step for Team Member 2

Not a vague intention. A concrete action, a date, and who needs to be involved.

_____

_____

_____

_____

# Team Member 3

Name:_____Role:_____How long have they been in this role?:_____

**Diagnostic questions:** answer each. The pattern across the answers points to the diagnosis.

| Diagnostic question | Your answer/observation |
|---|---|
| When did the performance issue start? Recently, or has it always been this way? | |
| Is performance worse at specific times of day? | |
| Does quality vary depending on the type of task, or is it consistently low across all tasks? | |
| Has this person responded to previous feedback, structure, or training? | |
| Has their output declined over time, or has it always been inconsistent in specific areas? | |
| When given structure and clear expectations, does their output improve, or stay the same? | |
| In what tasks or contexts do they shine? | |

## My diagnosis

- □ Focus Fatigue. Implement 3.3 structure, protect breaks, give it 2-3 weeks.
- □ Role / Skill Mismatch. Have role-fit conversation, reassign or restructure.
- □ Motivation Problem. Let data speak through structured blocks.
- □ Unclear. Need more data points before deciding.

## Specific next step for Team Member 3

Not a vague intention. A concrete action, a date, and who needs to be involved.

_____

_____

_____

_____

# 7.2 The pattern-matching warnings

The three-diagnosis framework is powerful precisely because it reduces a complicated situation to three options. The downside is that pattern-matching can fire too fast. A confident-but-wrong diagnosis is more dangerous than an honest unknown. By the end of this exercise, you'll have screened your roster against the three most common misdiagnoses (new-hire adjustment, overloaded high performer, post-promotion learning curve) so a quick label doesn't override the data. The book's Lisa story is the case in point. Confident misdiagnosis would have cost a top performer. Patience was the right call.

*Three common misdiagnoses. Catch yourself before you make them.*

**Don't confuse a new hire's adjustment period with a motivation problem.**

A new person hasn't had time to find their rhythm yet. Give them 60-90 days minimum before drawing conclusions about their motivation.

**Don't confuse an overloaded high performer with a mismatch.**

Sometimes your best person is buckling because you keep adding to their plate. The fix isn't to question their fit. It's to look at their workload.

**Don't confuse a newly promoted team member's learning curve with focus fatigue.**

New responsibilities take time to absorb. Three weeks of slower output is often normal.

**Which team members might fit one of those warnings instead of the diagnoses above?**

# You've completed Part 7.

You have a diagnosis for the team members who have been on your mind. You know what next step each one needs. You're making personnel decisions using structure and data.
Most owners run a team for years without ever doing this exercise. They drag along confusion about why one person isn't performing, and either let it fester for too long or make a decision too quickly. Neither serves the team member, the business, or the rest of the team.

PRACTICE

*Before you move on: pick the team member at the top of your mind and complete their diagnostic form right now. One clear diagnosis, written down, beats five vague ones you keep meaning to think about.*

**The right diagnosis, acted on now, is worth more than five right diagnoses put off until later.**

# THE REMOTE 3.3 SETUP

Where you are in your journey:

*the framework is running with the team. Now you handle the version of the team that doesn't share an office. By the end of this section, you'll have a remote-specific structure, a daily template, and a team setup that makes recovery visible across the calendar.*

Remote work works just fine and dandy with the 3.3 Rule.

In an office, the building did half the structural work. The commute marked the transition from home to work. The walk to lunch marked the transition between focus blocks. The visible exit at 6 p.m. marked the end of the day. Other people in the room signaled that the workday was happening.

Remove all of that, and most remote workers just… work all the time, badly. The boundaries collapse. The breaks blur into distraction. Output goes down and hours go up, which is the opposite of what was supposed to happen.

**Remote work done right, with deliberate structure, clear signals, real breaks, and an output-based culture, is actually a tremendous environment for the 3.3 Rule.**

# 8.1 Your Personal Remote Setup

Whether you're fully remote or hybrid, your physical setup is the first signal-builder. Walk through each item and check it off as you put it in place.

> ***BEFORE YOU SKIP THIS*** *If you're thinking "I've worked from home for years, I don't need a setup checklist," answer this honestly first. Do you reliably stop working at the same time each day? Do your breaks happen somewhere other than the same chair? Do the people around you know when you're in a focus block? If any answer is no, the setup isn't dialed in. Working from home for years isn't the same as working from home well.*

## Designated workspace

Ideally separate from sleeping and leisure areas. A specific corner counts if a separate room isn't available. The point is the brain learning that this physical spot means "work."

**Where is your work happening right now?**

_____

## Start-of-day routine. Your commute substitute

Without a commute, the brain doesn't get the transitional signal that the day is starting. You have to build one. Coffee made deliberately. A short walk before sitting down. Getting dressed (yes, including pants). The activity matters less than the consistency.

**Your start-of-day routine:**

_____

_____

## End-of-day shutdown signal

Without a physical departure, many remote workers never fully clock out. What closes the loop for you? Closing the laptop with intention. A specific phrase. A walk around the block. A change of clothes. Something that tells your brain: today's work is done.

**Your end-of-day signal:**

_____

_____

## Focus-block environmental cue

- □ Headphones on (most common, signals to family and household)
- □ Door closed
- □ Status update in team tool (Slack, Teams, calendar busy)
- □ Physical sign on the door or desk
- □ Other: _____

## Remote Setup Checklist

*Work through this list. Check each one off as you put it in place.*

- □ Designated workspace identified, separate from sleeping and leisure
- □ Start-of-day routine defined and consistent (commute substitute)
- □ End-of-day shutdown signal established. The laptop closes, the tab closes, the day ends
- □ Physical focus-block signal in place (headphones, door, status, signage)
- □ Break location different from work location, even just another room or outside
- □ Break blocks visible on shared calendar so the team sees recovery as normal
- □ Working hours communicated clearly to team, family, anyone who might interrupt
- □ Distraction plan written: known interruptions identified, response pre-decided

# 8.2. Design Your Remote 3.3 Day

A remote workday that isn't designed on paper first defaults to constant low-level reactivity. Checking Slack, drifting between tasks, never quite starting and never quite stopping. By the end of this exercise, you'll have a written daily template with specific times, specific work, and specific signals marking the transitions between focus blocks and breaks.

*Design your day: What happens when, with signal, in which location.*

## When is your brain consistently sharpest for deep focus work?

- □ Early morning (before 9 a.m.)
- □ Mid-morning (9 a.m. to 12 p.m.)
- □ After lunch
- □ Late afternoon / evening

Schedule your longest, most important focus block during this window.

## My remote 3.3 day template

Fill in each slot with your specific plan and the signal or cue that marks the transition.

| Time slot | What happens (your specific plan) | Signal/cue |
|---|---|---|
| Start-of-day routine (signal) | | |
| Focus Block 1 | | |
| Break 1 | | |
| Focus Block 2 | | |
| Break 2 | | |
| Focus Block 3 (if applicable) | | |
| Wrap-up / Admin | | |
| End of day signal/shutdown | | |

# 8.3. Remote Breaks: What Works And What Doesn't

Remote breaks are uniquely vulnerable. The fridge, the phone, the sofa, and the laptop all live in the same room as the work or close by. By the end of this exercise, you'll know which break behaviors are sabotaging your recovery at home and which ones genuinely reset you. And you'll have a list of remote-adapted options ready for the next focus block transition. The book's point: a break that doesn't change your location, your screen, or your posture isn't a break.

*Remote work makes bad breaks more tempting. Design your breaks deliberately.*

| Remote bad breaks | Remote good breaks |
|---|---|
| X Scrolling your phone on the same couch you take meetings from | ✓ Stepping outside, even for five minutes |
| X Switching from work tabs to personal tabs without leaving the chair | ✓ Walking to a different room for water or food |
| X "Just checking" Slack one more time before lunch | ✓ Cooking or assembling a real lunch, away from the laptop |
| X Eating at the desk while the laptop ping | ✓ A short walk around the block |
| X Playing video games | ✓ Stretching, breathing, or any movement that resets the body |
| X Running errands | ✓ Conversation with another human about something not work |

## Pick your remote break menu

*Five to seven options you'll actually do. Specific to your home, your neighborhood, your household.*

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

# 8.4. Reflection

**Remote work gives you more flexibility. What has that flexibility cost you in terms of focus and recovery?**

**What is one structural change, a signal, a routine, a boundary, that would make the biggest difference to your remote 3.3 practice starting Monday?**

# You've completed Part 8.

Most remote-work conversations are about whether it works. The reality is there are many factors that support that remote work does and doesn’t work. I’m not here to argue any of that. This part you completed gives you the tools to make remote-work the most productive it can be, should you choose to offer it to team members or choose it for your own structure.

There is one Part left. After all the tactics, the schedules, the worksheets, and the team rollout plans, the workbook closes by asking: what does life actually look like now? What goals that previously felt impossible are now within reach? That's where we go next.

PRACTICE

*Before you move on: open your team's shared calendar. Add one visible break block for today or tomorrow. Label it "Recovery break." Make it public. That single act normalizes recovery for your entire remote team.*

# LIFE ON THE OTHER SIDE

Where you are in your journey:
*this is your graduation. The tactics are behind you. By the end of this section, you'll have a written vision of what the 3.3 Rule actually buys you in your business, your time, and your life. And five specific commitments to protect it.*

The 3.3 Rule is a structural decision about what kind of life your business is going to support.

On the other side of the 3.3 Rule is three freedoms. The three freedoms you wanted when you decided to start your own business.

### The three freedoms

**TIME FREEDOM**

*Your calendar is yours again. You are not the only one who can do everything. The business runs when you are not in it.*

**MONEY FREEDOM**

*Your business is profitable enough to give you options. You can fund the life you actually want.*

**MENTAL FREEDOM**

*You leave work at work. Your family gets a version of you that is actually present.*

# 9.1. Your Business Vision

A workbook full of tactics produces no change unless the tactics are pointed at something specific you want. By the end of this exercise, you'll have a written, four-line picture of the version of your business you're working toward. Time freedom, money freedom, the milestone, the personal goal. In your own handwriting, in concrete terms. The book's closing argument is that the 3.3 Rule isn't a productivity hack. It's a structural decision about what kind of life your business is going to support.

> *After doing all the work in this workbook, what does the version of your business look like that you're building toward? Specific. Concrete. Written in your handwriting, and your voice.*

### The time freedom goal I am working toward

_____

_____

_____

_____

## What I will do with ten additional productive hours per week

*Not vague ("more family time"). Specific ("Wednesday afternoons with the kids. Homework, then a walk before dinner.").*

## The business milestone I will now reach

*The thing you've been circling for a year or more but never executed because execution required focus you didn't have.*

## The personal goal this makes possible

*Health. A trip. A creative project. A relationship. Something for yourself, not just for the business.*

# 9.2. Someday Is Now

Most owners carry a short list of goals they've been telling themselves they'll get to "someday." The project, the trip, the thing they'd stop tolerating if work weren't consuming them. The 3.3 Rule recovers the time, energy, and mental space the business has been quietly draining from your life. Someday is this day.

### What would you do with ten more productive hours per week, beyond what you wrote above?

### What project have you been putting off because you were too depleted to start it?

**Where do you want to take your family that you keep saying "next year"?**

**What goal in your business have you been circling but never executing?**

**If you knew this version of work was sustainable, what would you stop tolerating starting Monday?**

# 9.3. My Five Commitments

A vision is fragile until it's anchored in specific commitments with names, times, and accountability attached. By the end of this exercise, you'll have written down five. The first thing you're doing differently Monday. The person you're telling. The focus block on the calendar this week. The Part you'll return to first. The one item you're protecting in your week. Making the workbook a thing you've done, not a thing you've read. The book closes the same way. The framework only becomes real when the calendar reflects it before you close the cover.

*A vision without a commitment is just a nice thought. These five commitments turn what you've learned into something real. Fill them in before you close this workbook.*

| # | Commitment | My specific answer |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | The first thing I'm doing differently starting Monday. | |
| 2 | One person I'm telling about this workbook. | |
| 3 | The 3.3 focus block I'm scheduling right now (time, day, what work). | |
| 4 | The one Part I'm going back to first (where I need the most work). | |
| 5 | What I'm committing to protect on my calendar this week. | |

# Before You Close This Workbook

## Here's what you've built in working through this:

- You can see the real cost of how you were working before.
- You've run a five-day Starter Week and identified your Focus Profile.
- You take real recovery breaks now.
- You've audited your time and know what should leave your plate.
- You've mapped your true capacity and stopped pretending the math works when it doesn't.
- You've planned a team rollout that frames the work as an experiment, not a mandate.
- You've diagnosed your struggling team members before making any irreversible decisions.
- You've designed a remote setup, for yourself or your team, that builds the structure an office used to give you for free.
- You have a written vision of what life looks like on the other side, and five commitments to protect it.

That is not a small change. That is most owners' entire next year of growth, run in a single workbook.

**You don't need a hundred-point plan.**
**You don't need a perfect system built before breakfast tomorrow. You need a decision. Start small. One focused block. One real break. One honest conversation with your team.**

Protect your capacity. Guard your energy. Give yourself room to think, breathe, and lead.
You are already the kind of person who wants a better way. A smarter way. A human way.
Let this be your new standard. Not exhaustion. Not guilt. Not hustle theater.

# TAKE BREAKS. GO FASTER. WORK BETTER.

PRACTICE

*Before you close this. Make one of your new commitments real right now. Open your calendar.* ***Do it.***

# Make It Stick

> *The first nine Parts of this workbook helped you create the tools for applying and living with the 3.3 Rule. This part, the journal part, so cleverly named is to help you through your first 90 days of this new rhythm.*

By finishing Part 9, you have a vision of five commitments you're willing to focus on. We know, life is going to happen though. And sometimes reality can get in the way of our commitments.

We created this journal because it will help you work through reality toward those commitments.
Use one weekly log spread per week. Don't skip ahead. Don't fill out three weeks from memory at once. The point is the in-the-moment record keeping. For example, What you noticed this week, what worked, what didn't. Reflecting on this in the moment is how we overcome excuses.
After four weekly logs, take one Monthly Review page. After two months and eight weekly logs, take the Quarterly Reset. Repeat the cycle for as long as you find it useful.

# Weekly 3.3 Log. Week 1

**Week of:**_____

| BLOCK/BREAK | MON | TUES | WED | THU | FRIDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Block 1. Focus on | | | | | |
| Break 1 | | | | | |
| Block 2. Focus on | | | | | |
| Break 2 | | | | | |
| Block 3. Focus on | | | | | |
| What I produced | | | | | |

## WHAT WORKED THIS WEEK

*Block lengths, times of day, recovery activities, anything that surprised you.*

## WHAT DIDN'T WORK

*Where you skipped breaks. Where focus broke down. Where you fell back into old patterns.*

**One adjustment I'm making next week:**

**Self-rated stress this week (1-10):**

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐

**Self-rated energy this week (1-10):**

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐

# Weekly 3.3 Log. Week 2

**Week of:**_____

| BLOCK/BREAK | MON | TUES | WED | THU | FRIDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Block 1. Focus on | | | | | |
| Break 1 | | | | | |
| Block 2. Focus on | | | | | |
| Break 2 | | | | | |
| Block 3. Focus on | | | | | |
| What I produced | | | | | |

## WHAT WORKED THIS WEEK

*Block lengths, times of day, recovery activities, anything that surprised you.*

## WHAT DIDN'T WORK

*Where you skipped breaks. Where focus broke down. Where you fell back into old patterns.*

**One adjustment I'm making next week:**

**Self-rated stress this week (1-10):**

1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10 □

**Self-rated energy this week (1-10):**

1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10 □

# Weekly 3.3 Log. Week 3

**Week of:**_____

| BLOCK/BREAK | MON | TUES | WED | THU | FRIDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Block 1. Focus on | | | | | |
| Break 1 | | | | | |
| Block 2. Focus on | | | | | |
| Break 2 | | | | | |
| Block 3. Focus on | | | | | |
| What I produced | | | | | |

## WHAT WORKED THIS WEEK

*Block lengths, times of day, recovery activities, anything that surprised you.*

_____

_____

## WHAT DIDN'T WORK

*Where you skipped breaks. Where focus broke down. Where you fell back into old patterns.*

_____

_____

## One adjustment I'm making next week:

_____

## Self-rated stress this week (1-10):

1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10 □

## Self-rated energy this week (1-10):

1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10 □

# Weekly 3.3 Log. Week 4

**Week of:**_____

| BLOCK/BREAK | MON | TUES | WED | THU | FRIDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Block 1. Focus on | | | | | |
| Break 1 | | | | | |
| Block 2. Focus on | | | | | |
| Break 2 | | | | | |
| Block 3. Focus on | | | | | |
| What I produced | | | | | |

## WHAT WORKED THIS WEEK

*Block lengths, times of day, recovery activities, anything that surprised you.*

_____

_____

## WHAT DIDN'T WORK

*Where you skipped breaks. Where focus broke down. Where you fell back into old patterns.*

_____

_____

## One adjustment I'm making next week:

_____

## Self-rated stress this week (1-10):

1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10 □

## Self-rated energy this week (1-10):

1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10 □

# Monthly Review. Month 1

**Month of:**_____

| METRIC | W1 | W2 | W3 | W4 | W5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Average stress (1-10) | | | | | |
| Average energy (1-10) | | | | | |
| Number of full focus blocks completed | | | | | |
| Number of breaks actually taken | | | | | |
| Output per hour (rated 1-10) | | | | | |
| Hours worked | | | | | |

## Biggest win this month

## One thing I'm changing for next month

## Biggest pattern I noticed

*A time of day. A task type. A break habit. Something that keeps repeating.*

## Where I'm still pretending the math works

*Be honest. Most of us still have one or two places where we're overcommitting and calling it discipline.*

# Weekly 3.3 Log. Week 5

**Week of:**_____

| BLOCK/BREAK | MON | TUES | WED | THU | FRIDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Block 1. Focus on | | | | | |
| Break 1 | | | | | |
| Block 2. Focus on | | | | | |
| Break 2 | | | | | |
| Block 3. Focus on | | | | | |
| What I produced | | | | | |

## WHAT WORKED THIS WEEK

*Block lengths, times of day, recovery activities, anything that surprised you.*

_____

_____

## WHAT DIDN'T WORK

*Where you skipped breaks. Where focus broke down. Where you fell back into old patterns.*

_____

_____

## One adjustment I'm making next week:

_____

## Self-rated stress this week (1-10):

1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10 □

## Self-rated energy this week (1-10):

1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10 □

# Weekly 3.3 Log. Week 6

**Week of:**_____

| BLOCK/BREAK | MON | TUES | WED | THU | FRIDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Block 1. Focus on | | | | | |
| Break 1 | | | | | |
| Block 2. Focus on | | | | | |
| Break 2 | | | | | |
| Block 3. Focus on | | | | | |
| What I produced | | | | | |

## WHAT WORKED THIS WEEK

*Block lengths, times of day, recovery activities, anything that surprised you.*

_____

_____

## WHAT DIDN'T WORK

*Where you skipped breaks. Where focus broke down. Where you fell back into old patterns.*

_____

_____

## One adjustment I'm making next week:

_____

## Self-rated stress this week (1-10):

1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10 □

## Self-rated energy this week (1-10):

1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10 □

# Weekly 3.3 Log. Week 7

**Week of:**_____

| BLOCK/BREAK | MON | TUES | WED | THU | FRIDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Block 1. Focus on | | | | | |
| Break 1 | | | | | |
| Block 2. Focus on | | | | | |
| Break 2 | | | | | |
| Block 3. Focus on | | | | | |
| What I produced | | | | | |

## WHAT WORKED THIS WEEK

*Block lengths, times of day, recovery activities, anything that surprised you.*

_____

_____

## WHAT DIDN'T WORK

*Where you skipped breaks. Where focus broke down. Where you fell back into old patterns.*

_____

_____

## One adjustment I'm making next week:

_____

## Self-rated stress this week (1-10):

1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10 □

## Self-rated energy this week (1-10):

1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10 □

# Weekly 3.3 Log. Week 8

**Week of:**_____

| BLOCK/BREAK | MON | TUES | WED | THU | FRIDAY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Block 1. Focus on | | | | | |
| Break 1 | | | | | |
| Block 2. Focus on | | | | | |
| Break 2 | | | | | |
| Block 3. Focus on | | | | | |
| What I produced | | | | | |

## WHAT WORKED THIS WEEK

*Block lengths, times of day, recovery activities, anything that surprised you.*

_____

_____

## WHAT DIDN'T WORK

*Where you skipped breaks. Where focus broke down. Where you fell back into old patterns.*

_____

_____

## One adjustment I'm making next week:

_____

## Self-rated stress this week (1-10):

1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10 □

## Self-rated energy this week (1-10):

1 □ 2 □ 3 □ 4 □ 5 □ 6 □ 7 □ 8 □ 9 □ 10 □

# Monthly Review. Month 2

**Month of:**_____

| METRIC | W1 | W2 | W3 | W4 | W5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Average stress (1-10) | | | | | |
| Average energy (1-10) | | | | | |
| Number of full focus blocks completed | | | | | |
| Number of breaks actually taken | | | | | |
| Output per hour (rated 1-10) | | | | | |
| Hours worked | | | | | |

## Biggest win this month

_____

_____

_____

## One thing I'm changing for next month

_____

_____

_____

## Biggest pattern I noticed

*A time of day. A task type. A break habit. Something that keeps repeating.*

_____

_____

_____

## Where I'm still pretending the math works

*Be honest. Most of us still have one or two places where we're overcommitting and calling it discipline.*

_____

_____

_____

# Quarterly Reset

**Quarter ending:**_____

## Of the five commitments from Part 9, where do they each stand?

| Commitment | Status | If off-track: what changes? |
|---|---|---|
| | □ On track □ Slipping □ Reset needed | |
| | □ On track □ Slipping □ Reset needed | |
| | □ On track □ Slipping □ Reset needed | |
| | □ On track □ Slipping □ Reset needed | |
| | □ On track □ Slipping □ Reset needed | |
| | □ On track □ Slipping □ Reset needed | |

## Which Part of this workbook is calling me back?

Three months in, you'll know exactly which Part has the most to give you on round two. Pick one.

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## What I'd tell the version of me who started this workbook

One paragraph. The advice you wish someone had given you three months ago when you opened to page one.

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# Recommended Reading

*The 3.3 Rule is built on a foundation laid by other thinkers, researchers, and authors. If this workbook has moved you, these are the next stops.*

## On focus and deep work

- ***Deep Work*** by Cal Newport. The foundational case for protected attention as a competitive advantage.
- ***Rest*** by Alex Soojung-Kim Pang. The research-backed argument for recovery as a productivity tool.
- ***Take Breaks, Work Better*** by John Briggs. This whole workbook is based on this book, so just in case you didn't know that, now you do.

## On building businesses that don't destroy their owners

- ***Profit First*** by Mike Michalowicz. The small-business cash management system that pairs naturally with the 3.3 Rule.
- ***Get Scalable*** by Ryan Deiss. Most business owners are putting in a lot of effort but still find a ceiling. Fixing the structure is the solution. Pairs with the 3.3 Rule's work on founder capacity.
- ***Buy Back Your Time*** by Dan Martell. The delegation framework that frees up the focus blocks the 3.3 Rule protects.

## On teams, performance, and culture

- ***Never Lose a Customer Again*** by Joey Coleman. The first 100 days decide whether a client stays for life or churns. The retention playbook most owners skip.
- ***The Resilience Plan*** by Marie-Hélène Pelletier. Building the recovery practices that keep high performers high performers.
- ***Buoyant*** by Susie deVille. Sustainable success without the burnout most successful people accept as the price.

# References

The research and ideas referenced throughout this workbook draw from these sources. Full citations are available in Take Breaks, Work Better.


- Vouchercloud research on workplace productivity (workers genuinely productive ~2 hours 53 minutes per 8-hour day).
- Princeton Neuroscience Institute. Research on attentional cycles and the brain's natural switching between focus and distraction.
- Dr. Alejandro Lleras, University of Illinois. Studies on periodic breaks and sustained attention.
- Limeade Institute. Research on employee burnout, engagement, and recovery.
- K. Anders Ericsson et al. Research on deliberate practice and the limits of sustained focused work.
- Cal Newport. Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World.
- Henry Ford and the standardization of the 8-hour workday, 1926. Fair Labor Standards Act, 1938.
- Maryam Mohsin. Oberlo small business statistics. Georgina Tzanetos, GoBankingRates. Small business economic impact analysis.

# Working with John

## Speaking and team training

John speaks regularly at conferences, corporate offsites, and industry events. He covers the 3.3 Rule, team performance, and building sustainable businesses. Engagements range from a 60-minute keynote to a full-day team workshop. If you want this workbook brought to life inside your organization, the training engagement is the fastest way.

INQUIRE

## The 3.3 Rule digital course

If this workbook moved you, the full digital course goes deeper. Nine video modules walk you through every concept in this workbook with on-camera coaching, expanded stories, and additional tools.

ENROLL

## Incite Tax

John is the CEO of Incite Tax, a CPA firm built from the inside out around the principles in this workbook. If you're a business owner looking for tax and accounting work from a firm that genuinely practices what it teaches, and has no problem sharing that the **#IRSsucks**, reach out!

LEARN MORE

# Bulk Orders for Teams

**If you lead a team, the cost of this workbook per person is less than one bad afternoon of unproductive work.**

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# One Last Thing

## Subscribe to my substack

If this workbook helped, even a little, substack is where the work continues. Weekly notes on focus, recovery, and building a business that doesn't cost you your life. Short, honest, and the same kind of practical you found in these pages. And a community that shares this same passion.

It's also where our community tells us what's working, what isn't, and what the next workbook should cover. If you have feedback on this one, typos, missing exercises, edge cases that need their own Part, the substack community is where to tell us.

**SUBSCRIBE AT**

**therealjohnbriggs.substack.com**

Thank you for trusting me with the structure of your week.

**I hope this workbook gives you your life back, just like the 3.3 Rule gave me mine.**

***John***

**Take breaks. Go faster. *Work better.***