



www.AgileLeanLife.com

Upgrade your mindset

...to the superhuman version

Blaz Kos

by Blaz Kos, agileleanlife.com
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Blaz Kos

I am on a life mission **to make the world a more organized, innovative and transcendent place** by helping individuals, organizations and communities achieve their peak potential and an entirely new level of performance.



I have helped many individuals, companies and organizations create, deliver and capture real value by becoming lean, agile and data-driven.

I am obsessively passionate about **hi-tech start-ups, mass media, personal development and making the world a better place**. I have spent the past ten years of my career developing the start-up, entrepreneurship and venture capital ecosystem in Slovenia and Eastern Europe. Here are some highlights from my previous work with startups and startup ecosystems:

- Helped to establish the university incubator (600 m2) at the biggest university in Slovenia
- Established the first and biggest angel network in Slovenia with 40+ investors and 12+ investments
- Helped establish the first business angel network in Croatia, Serbia and Macedonia
- Was an investment manager at a 6,000,000 € seed VC fund
- Advised the Slovenian government on business and start-up environment development
- Was in the management board of the biggest technology park in Slovenia – 66,000 m2
- Established the first franchised co-working space at 7 locations in Slovenia – 7 x 200 m2
- Running my own consulting company Venturelab Ltd.
- Co-organizing one of the biggest two day CEE conferences for entrepreneurs, PODIM
- Established and running two start-up accelerators with a 4,800,000 € public-private fund – Start:up Geek House and Go:Global Slovenia
- Author of the Agile and Lean Life Blog / ALL Movement

Over the past 10 years **I have lectured at more than 600 events across the Central and Eastern Europe and mentored over 300 start-ups**. My lectures used to be on traditional business topic like business planning, financial forecasting, analyzing the market, raising funds etc., but today I lecture mainly about new techniques such as lean and agile startup and how these techniques can be used in our lives as a personal development and productivity enhancement strategy.

By organizing the big regional conference PODIM, **I got the chance to get to know “lean start-up” authorities** such as Ash Maurya, Robert Fitzpatrick, Gregory Bernarda and others. Besides the PODIM conference, there are many other cool events I helped organize; events like Startup Weekend, mini Seedcamp, Wayra CEE tour and so on.

Besides hi-tech start-ups I am also a personal development enthusiast. I was born in a broken-up family without any help, and the only way to a brighter future was for me to begin developing my skills and competences with no mercy, including changing my inherited mindset and attitude towards life.

I have a long way to go, but I am still very passionate about helping others achieve their personal and professional goals. I have no difficulty with sharing my struggles and what I have learnt along the way, with no deceitfulness/and taboos. Thus **I can add around 100 workshops and a few hundred consultations to totally different people on personal development topics** like career planning, time management, goal setting etc.

As a part of my social responsibility, I had initiated and **co-founded a network of 150 most talented and socially proactive representatives of Generation Y** (the Ypsilon Institute), with a mission to give as many opportunities to young people as possible.

My consulting clients at Venturelab Ltd. were: Educational institutes, such as universities and research institutes, start-up companies, small and medium enterprises, investors, governments, chambers of commerce, sometimes big companies and individuals who need help with achieving their goals.

In my everyday life, I am a productivity freak, always working on two monitors. I cannot imagine my life without technology, gadgets and creating new cool products and services. I feel at home in Zen Buddhism, but find it incredibly difficult to practice as I am drawn to extremes. **Therefore I prefer to spend all my free time thinking, analyzing, creating, innovating or hiking high up in the mountains.** I don't like watching TV, shopping, small talk, parties and any kind of clutter.

I 2016 I decided to go full-time blogging.

You are always welcome to visit my blog:

www.AgileLeanLife.com

Foreword

From Buddha (Zen Buddhism) and Marcus Aurelius (stoic Roman emperor) to every single personal development guru or coach today, there is one piece of advice that comes forward again and again: **You become what you think.** Changing your thoughts is the only way you can really change your life to a more positive course and it's the only way to live the good life you really want.

I completely agree with this philosophy, from my own personal experience. If you want to make positive changes in your life, you really do have to start by upgrading your mindset and the way you think. The good news is that you can easily change the quality of your life by upgrading your mindset. Your thoughts are kind of instructions for your future self on what to become.

The bad news is that almost no guru tells you exactly how to upgrade your thinking. Well, it's time to end that. **It's time for you to get access to all the necessary hacks and tools that can help you live your dream life, simply by more properly managing your thoughts.** Welcome to the ultimate guide that will teach you how to upgrade your mindset – to the superhuman version.

In this eBook you will learn:

- Why thoughts are important and how they shape your life
- Several awesome tools and hacks for upgrading your mindset to the best possible version
- All the know-how necessary to strategically and systematically upgrade your mindset
- Different exercises that will help you make the new mindset updates permanent
- Additional ideas that may speed up and help you properly update your mindset
- Why updating your mindset is only one part of the equation. As we will see, you also need “constant learning updates” to stay superhuman.

The only investment you have to make is reading the eBook and then implementing the tools. **It's almost a zero investment** (if we count your time) **compared to what you get out of it – an opportunity to live your dream life and become superhuman.** Thus we can easily say that it costs you nothing to update your mindset.

It costs you nothing to update your mindset.

The eBook is divided into four chapters:

- **Chapter 1: How your thoughts shape your life**
- **Chapter 2: The core upgrades you need for your new superhuman mindset**
 - From the fixed mindset to the growth mindset
 - From the scarcity mindset to the abundance mindset
 - From negative thinking to positive thinking
 - From the problem-oriented mindset to the solution-oriented mindset
 - From reactive thinking to proactive thinking
 - From suboptimal thinking to optimal thinking
 - From egotistical thinking to agile thinking
 - Regret Minimization Framework (for bigger life decisions)
 - Shutting down your mind
- **Chapter 3: How to upgrade your mindset**
 - Process description
 - Techniques to pay more attention to your thoughts and emotions
 - Cognitive approaches (cognitive reframing, self-reflecting journaling etc.)
 - Other supportive methods (transformational vocabulary, optimism ratio etc.)
 - Behavioral approaches (behavioral conditioning, behavioral accounting etc.)
- **Chapter 4: Increasing your competence level**
 - The learning formula
 - Taking good care of your brain
 - The importance of reading

Don't forget to also [download all the free accompanying files to apply theory in practice](#):

- Emotional accounting and cognitive reframing – Template
- Happiness Index – Template
- Categorization of toxic thoughts
- Proofs of abundance
- List of questions to encourage optimal thinking

This eBook's **four chapters are also blog posts** at www.agileleanlife.com:

- Chapter 1 - 2: <https://agileleanlife.com/upgrade-your-mindset/>
- Chapter 3 - 4: <https://agileleanlife.com/how-to-upgrade-your-mindset-tools-and-hacks>

1. How your thoughts shape your life

One of the most popular and important quotes in history, attributed to Mahatma Gandhi, goes like this: **Your beliefs become your thoughts, your thoughts become your words, your words become your actions, your actions become your habits, your habits become your values and your values become your destiny.** It's a causal analysis that shows very well how your thoughts shape your destiny.

The problem in this causality or, to be more exact, between your thoughts and your destiny, is that the human mind is filled with drunken monkeys, jumping around, screeching, chattering, carrying on endlessly – trying to hurt you and hurt others. Drunken monkeys are no good for your destiny, that's why we say that **even your worst enemy can't hurt you as badly as your untamed mind can.**

Nearly all people have extremely poor control over their mind. Their mindset is weak, and consequently negative and destructive thoughts start hindering their lives day by day. It's impossible to live a positive, quality, peak performance life with a negative mind and a poor mindset. You have exactly 0.0% chances of succeeding in that.

Here are a few examples of tough life situations caused by nothing but a poor mindset:

- *Avoiding challenges, giving up easily and seeing any effort in life as fruitless.*
- *Not listening to the feedback from your environment and using it to act smarter*
- *Being obsessed with how much other people make and what they own.*
- *Shyness, bitterness, depression, isolation, procrastination and feeling like a victim.*
- *Labeling yourself (or others) with negative labels like "I'm not good with computers"*
- *Focusing on what you don't have and on all the problems you have to face.*
- *Following the goals of others instead of your own goals.*
- *Feeling stuck, not acting at all and not knowing what to do or which next step to take.*
- *Engaging in non-productive and useless fights and gossiping.*
- *Not accepting the things you can't change .*
- *...and many other similar thinking patterns.*

A poor mindset can really paralyze your willpower and your desire to do things. A poor mindset always leads to suffering, misery and a low quality of life. Poor mindsets like hopelessness, helplessness, overwhelming yourself, jumping to conclusions, self-labelling, undervaluing the reward, perfectionism, fear of failure, fear of success, fear of disapproval and criticism, coercion and resentment, low frustration tolerance, guilt and self-blame are usually most commonly associated with average, zombie or even depressed and miserable life. And you definitely deserve better.

That leads to one very obvious direction and solution. Only strategic and constant work on your mindset will improve your thoughts; and better thoughts will bring more positive actions, more positive actions will bring more positive outcomes. It's that simple. Your way of thinking defines your way of doing things and interacting with the world. The better you think, the better your life experience is.

Only developing the right kind of mindset and carefully managing your thoughts **lead to personal wisdom, freedom, success and peak performance** – in other words, becoming the best version of yourself and living the good life.

By far the best thing you can do for the quality of your life is to cultivate the ability to respond to each moment with wisdom, compassion, generosity, kindness, creativity and responsibility. Towards yourself and other people.

No matter how difficult of a situation you are in, you can always reframe your way of looking at things. You can always find a more positive angle and wiser thoughts regarding a tough life situation, and consequently also change your goals and actions in a way that you have more control over your life. You can always put yourself in a position that enables you to make a step towards a brighter future.

But you can only achieve that with the right mindset. **An important fact of life is that the greatest power you always have is changing the angle of how you look at things.** In the end, the ultimate control you have is the control over your judgments and your mental state or, in other words, how you interpret the things that are happening to you.

There are **three ultimate goals you want to meet** when it comes to your mindset becoming the superhuman version. You want to:

1. Make sure you control your mind and not vice-versa (that your mind controls you).
2. Perform a few core updates to your mindset that will make your general way of thinking much better (all the necessary updates are described in this eBook).
3. Commit to lifelong learning and constantly improving yourself.

Now let's dive into the theory and **a step-by-step process of how to update your mind to the superhuman version** that will lead you to achieving your peak performance in every area of life.

2. The core upgrades you need for your new superhuman mindset

Unfortunately, there is no single update for having a superhuman mindset. **You need to make several different core updates** and all of them working together will take your mindset, way of thinking, general outlook on life and quality of decision-making to a whole new level.

Some of the upgrades are based on decades of scientific psychological research, others are more individual experiences of many different people who decided to dramatically improve their lives. Here are **the nine different crucial mindset updates that will take you straight to the superhuman version**:

1. From the fixed mindset to *the growth mindset*
2. From the scarcity mindset to *the abundance mindset*
3. From negative thinking to *positive thinking*
4. From the problem-oriented mindset to *the solution-oriented mindset*
5. From reactive thinking to *proactive thinking*
6. From suboptimal thinking to *optimal thinking*
7. From egotistical thinking to *agile thinking*
8. *Regret Minimization Framework* (for bigger life decisions)
9. *Shutting down your mind*

These are the updates you need, so it's time to make a deep dive into each mindset upgrade to see what exactly does it mean and how you can benefit from it.

2.1. From the fixed mindset to the growth mindset

Everything starts with the difference between having a growth and a fixed mindset. **This is the upgrade that unlocks access to all other upgrades**, this is the one mindset upgrade that makes up the whole difference between living a peak performance or average life. If you aren't willing to do this update, you can stop reading this eBook right now.

If you have the fixed mindset, you believe that your character and potential are unchangeable, that they've been "written in stone" since birth. With the fixed mindset, you assume things are as they are and there's nothing you can do about it; the only thing you can do is hope for a stroke of good luck from time to time. Why would you then need any brain updates anyway?

A fixed mindset means believing that your abilities, personality and character are determined at birth.

A fixed mindset leads to avoiding any challenges, avoiding any failure, trying to look smart at any cost instead of learning, self-labeling, defensive behavior and blaming others, ignoring constructive criticism, not following your own goals, envy and, last but not least, reaching your plateau in different areas of life very early. **With the fixed mindset, you give up early with every challenge you undertake and you see any kind of effort as pointless.**

Here are a few examples of thinking based on the fixed mindset:

- *Why should I bother, it won't change anything anyway.*
- *I'm either good at something or I'm not.*
- *I don't like challenges.*
- *When I fail, I'm a complete loser.*
- *The success of other people threatens me.*

On the other hand, **the growth mindset means that you believe in personal evolution and that you can improve your character by working on yourself.** In business, the growth mindset is called Kaizen and it means constant improvement. With the growth mindset, you don't take things as they are, but you know you can always improve them in one way or another.

The growth mindset means believing that your abilities, personality and character can be developed.

Here are a few examples of thinking based on the growth mindset:

- *I can learn everything I want to do.*
- *With effort I improve, learn and grow.*
- *I like challenges and I want to constantly challenge myself.*
- *When I fail, I can learn.*
- *The success of other people inspires me.*

A growth mindset leads towards constantly undertaking new challenges, being focused on learning and personal growth, trying new things and learning from failure, persisting through obstacles, minding constructive criticism and feedback from the environment, finding inspiration in other's people success and achieving personal peak performance in different areas of life with long-term effort. **If you have the growth mindset, you are very well aware that effort is the road to mastery.**

The difference between the growth mindset and the fixed mindset was introduced by Stanford professor Dr. Carol Dweck based on many years of scientific research. The growth mindset goes extremely well together with the Kaizen philosophy from lean production in business.

Kaizen is the Japanese word for a "good change" (Kai = change, Zen = good) and it means constant improvement or, to be more exact, it means **having a system of constantly looking for and implementing improvements**. There is always a way to do things better, make them better and improve them, even if they aren't broken. Including you. In Kaizen, problems are seen as opportunities to improve.

The bottom line of this upgrade is becoming aware that things aren't fixed and you can improve your life situation no matter how hard it is. You might not be able make yourself 5 cm taller, but **you can definitely become smarter, fitter, sharper, more goal-oriented, expose yourself to many more opportunities**, and so on. Only with the growth mindset can you become the best version of yourself.

Further reading for this brain update:

- Kaizen – [growth mindset and constant improvement](#)
- [Kaizen rules](#)
- [Anti-Kaizen rules](#)

2.2. From the scarcity mindset to the abundance mindset

With the growth mindset update, your brain gets programmed for you to constantly improve, grow and love challenges. You are aware that the quality of your life greatly depends on the effort you put in. You know that you get out of life only what you put in. Okay, it's time for the next update. The next update targets you **starting to focus on what you do have in life and the opportunities that are available to you**, instead of being focused on what you lack and how others are luckier than you are.

This update is called the abundance mindset. **The abundance mindset consists of three crucial elements:**

1. seeing all the possibilities the world has to offer in order to create, connect, grow and enjoy;
2. knowing that you deserve love and prosperity;
3. and realizing that if you'd experience only plentitude in life, it would be boring as hell and you wouldn't appreciate anything you have at all.

The opposite of the abundance mindset is a scarcity mentality. With the scarcity mentality, you focus on what you lack, how life is unfair, how you can't get what you want, how it's never enough, and so on. That isn't any good kind of focus. The scarcity mentality doesn't only lead to an impoverished life, it also makes you take malicious actions towards yourself and others.

The scarcity mindset leads to aggressive competitiveness and hurting yourself and others, it leads to envy, greed, gluttony, a desire to control people, hating it when other people succeed or even self-castration, procrastination, shyness, depression and isolation. **If you focus on the negative in life, you will only get more negative.**

This update is quite hard, but that's why it's so much more important. Because opportunities always exist, there is always a way to go forward and you always have things that you can be grateful for. The problem is that it's much easier to become blind to the opportunities than to become aware of your toxic beliefs, feelings and mind focus that block your assertiveness and cause symbolic self-castration or over-aggression.

Here are examples of scarcity thinking and beliefs:

- *There is only one right person for me in this world, if s/he doesn't love me, everything is lost.*
- *There are so many people living in poverty, so why would I deserve to be rich.*
- *Happy people are spoiled people who don't know the hard realities of life.*
- *I must take away from others to have more in my life, so others will suffer if I take more.*
- *Nobody really loves me; everyone just wants something from me.*
- *There are no right job opportunities for me and I don't have good business ideas.*

But **all those are nothing but cognitive errors**. There are more than 7 billion people in the world so there is no realistic reason why you should suffer in isolation. There are 4,000, billion dollars in circulation and you can definitely contribute to the markets somehow to make enough money.

There are 130 million books published so there is definitely one book you would be curious to read. There are more than 190 million companies and many of them your perfect fit to work for. Not to mention 1,200 different hobbies and sports you can do to really enjoy life. The world is full of abundance; you just have to see it.

When you update your mindset from the scarcity to the abundance one you realize that:

- You deserve to take care of your needs in a healthy and respectful manner
- You focus on all the opportunities you have and undertake the best ones
- You can satisfy your material needs based on win-win situations and providing value to markets
- There are no limits to how much love, creativity and encouragement you can share
- You should use domination exclusively when you must protect yourself and are in danger
- You don't need to be greedy and you don't need to control others

One more thing. **The abundance mindset doesn't mean that you should have unlimited material resources in life**. It means that deep inside, you feel that you deserve good things in life and go after your goals, focused on the opportunities you currently have – and there are always opportunities, there is always a step you can make towards a better life.

We will soon talk about different tools for updating your mindset. Nevertheless, I can't stop my eagerness to share with you the actions you can take. So you can do a simple exercise that will help you with the abundance mindset development.

Write down real data and proof of how much abundance there really is in the world, and then face your fears of rejection, abandonment, humiliation, missing out on things etc. Because only fears are stopping you from going after your goals, not the lack of opportunity.

In addition to that, make a gratitude list, have a list of your past accomplishments and a list of things you enjoy, visualize abundance, regularly brainstorm ideas, analyze all the opportunities available to you, develop a greater capacity for love, and be open and tolerant.

More about all that soon, but now let's go to the next update.

- Additional reading: [How to develop an abundance mindset](#)

2.3. From negative thinking to positive thinking

At this point, I suppose you've programmed yourself to constantly grow and focus on the opportunities you currently have. Nevertheless, you may still be hindered by severe negative thinking from time to time. And negative thinking is the worst kind of thinking.

The fact is that you simply can't live a positive life with a negative mind. You can move forward and be bitter at the same time. But you don't want that, you want to move forward and be happy and positive. This means that the purpose of this mindset upgrade is to completely root out negative thinking from you.

To evict negative thinking, you must first understand what negative thoughts are. Negative thoughts are also called cognitive distortions. The name comes from the fact that **when you think negatively, you interpret reality as much darker than it actually is** – you most often see things much more negatively than they really are.

With too many cognitive distortions, you're simply trapped in living a zombie life, seeing the world as very dark, sorrowful and full of terror. The extent of negative thinking is enormous. Your mood slumps, your self-image crumbles, your body doesn't function properly, your willpower becomes paralyzed and your own actions defeat you. You start sabotaging yourself and your negative thoughts become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

So the main question is: what is the main difference between positive and negative thinking? Here is a simple explanation. **Positive thoughts are tender thoughts of sharing, connecting and loving – yourself, people, things and ideas.** On the other hand, negative thoughts are rough mental energies of excluding, disconnecting and hating – yourself, people, things and ideas.

Positive thoughts	Negative thoughts
Connecting	Disconnecting
Sharing	Excluding
Loving	Hating

Now we have a very general and broad definition of positive and negative thinking. Nevertheless, negative thinking can be a lot more dissected in order to easily identify negative thoughts. Based on years of psychological research by David A. Burns, negative thinking comes up in the following different forms:

- **All-or-nothing thinking:** You think in absolute terms, everything is black or white, there is no middle path. But many times, the middle path is the best path.
- **Overgeneralization:** You see one negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.
- **Mental filtering:** You ignore the positive sides and focus only on negative things.
- **Discounting the positive:** You minimize or don't give any recognition to positive qualities.
- **Jumping to conclusions:** You assume the worst before even knowing what's really happening.
- **Magnification and minimization:** You make small problems big, and big opportunities small.
- **Emotional reasoning:** You reason exclusively from your emotions when they are negative. But your negative emotions are not solid proof of how reality really is.
- **Should statements:** You criticize yourself and others because of how things should be and what should be done. You preach to yourself and others with "should" statements.
- **Labeling:** You identify yourself or others with shortcomings and failures.
- **Personalization and blame:** You blame yourself for things that weren't entirely your fault or weren't your fault at all.

As you can see, all the negative thoughts are very violent and disconnecting in one way or another. Negative thoughts are nothing but your mind going to war with others or with yourself. And you should never go to war, especially not with yourself. Shifting from disconnecting, excluding and hating to connecting, sharing, tolerating and other gentle mental energies can do wonders for you. How exactly to do that, we will examine in the next chapter, but the simple fact is that **there is zero room for negative thoughts in the superhuman way of thinking.** Period.

- Additional reading: [Cognitive distortions and negative thinking](#)

2.4. From the problem-oriented mindset to the solution-oriented mindset

A big part of what you have to do in life is problem-solving. Nobody alive, now or ever, can live a life without problems. **The only people without problems are dead people.** You constantly have to deal with problems at work, problems at home, problems with people, problems with machines (computers), problems with yourself and your health, you name it. Problems are a fact of life and there are only two ways how you can approach and deal with this fact.

You can cry or you can be a problem-solver. In the first approach, you're only focused on a problem that's pissing you off, you negatively think about "how hard" your life is and when better (problem-free) times will come for you. You bitch, whine and complain, try to get some comfort from other people and hope that problems will die by themselves. Of course they won't, and sooner or later you'll have to deal with them. Usually people wait until problems grow so big that they just have to start dealing with them.

"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them." - Albert Einstein

But here's the catch. **You can't be focused on a problem and look for a creative solution at the same time.** You can't blame others for problems and brainstorm solutions at the same time. You can't bitch, whine and complain, and think of creative ideas for how a problem could be solved.

But the moment you shift your focus from a problem to potential solutions, negative emotions disappear and you can engage your creative mind. So the question is why would you even be focused on a problem in the first place, no matter how hard the situation is.

It doesn't make any sense. **Instead focus immediately on how to solve a problem.** That's why you must always obtain the solution-oriented mindset. You must be like Thomas Edison who tried 10,000 different ways until he invented a light bulb, everything without complaining and feeling sorry for himself. He just learned and looked for new ways how to do things.

Here are a few additional ideas for keeping a solution-oriented mindset:

- **Maintain a positive attitude.** A walk in nature can help with that a lot.
- Know that problems and waste are only opportunities for engaging your creative mind. Again, **problems equal opportunities.**
- Always question everything and **always look for ways how to do things better.**
- **Doubt the so-called best practices**, there are always ways to do things better.
- **Discard any fixed ideas** and stay flexible on how you'll get to the solution. At everything that exists or is only part of your imagination, you can look from a different angle. The most flexible survive, not the strongest ones. That also includes being flexible in your mind.
- **Eliminate "can't"** from your vocabulary.
- Do things right away and **immediately test new solutions and new ideas.** You need feedback from real-life situations and make further decisions based on solid data, not solely on your opinion.
- Know that every failure means nothing but being just one step closer to the right solution. **Success is a lousy teacher and failure is the best one.**
- **Seek the wisdom of other people**, such as coworkers, mentors, coaches. Never put your ego in front of learning from other people.

Every time you encounter a problem that pisses you off and you just want to start bitching, whining and complaining, pause for a moment. Instead take a deep breath, start managing your emotions and open your mind to creative problem-solving thinking.

- Further reading: [The difference between the problem- and solution-oriented mindset](#)

2.5. From reactive thinking to proactive thinking and superproactivity

When you successfully implement all the mindset updates mentioned so far, your life will already dramatically change to the better. Nevertheless, this superproactivity update takes everything even a step further; a lot further. **The main point of this update is to take full responsibility for your life.** Complete full responsibility for all life areas. First, let's look at the difference between the reactive and the proactive mindset.

The reactive mindset means that you don't take any initiative or make strategic decisions about your life, you just go where life kicks you; and then you react to what happens to you, sometimes with positive, but more often with negative feelings. **Being reactive means you have no clear goals about your life, you just hope for the best.** But only having hope is never a good strategy.

The reactive mindset is often seen in chosen words like I need, I must, I can't, I have to, if only and similar. Changing vocabulary to I want, I prefer, I can, I choose and I will is the first step toward a proactive mindset.

The main idea of being proactive is **to ask yourself what's likely to happen, and you act accordingly in order to get the best possible outcome.** You act before a situation becomes a source of frustration or crisis. You are always one step further than your life is.

Below are **the steps for becoming a proactive person.** If you want to become one, you have to:

- Be aware that life doesn't just happen, you are the one designing your life
- Take full responsibility for your life and stop blaming others
- Work hard on developing healthy self-confidence
- Set a clear vision and mission for your life
- Strategically define your life strategy and follow it
- Very clearly define the outcomes and goals you want to achieve
- Analyze your environment for what's likely to happen in the future, how that influences your life, and prepare several potential scenarios for how you can take advantage of market shifts and other paradigms in the environment
- Strategically choose and build relationships
- Hope for the best, but be prepared for the worst

Nevertheless, you can take your mindset even a step further from proactivity. It's called being superproactive. Superproactivity means taking full and complete responsibility for your life, **including the areas where you expect nature, love, government, church or whoever to take care of things instead of you.** You take responsibility for your own life in the hardest areas ever.

Superproactivity means taking full control over your life. Full!

But which are these areas (with an example of reactive behavior)?

- **Intimate relationships:** You wait to fall in love
- **Career:** You want to do something that you're passionate about
- **Pension:** You hope the government will take care of your pension
- **Job security:** A diploma and a job contract with a strong union backup is what I need
- **Raising children:** Everyone has kids, so we all just know how to raise kids
- **Information consumption:** You read what appears on your social network timelines

It's time that you also proactively take responsibility for these areas in your life. That means getting educated, thinking ahead and building a superior strategy, putting yourself in a position of many options, and following through with your plan while staying agile and flexible.

- [You can read more about superproactivity here.](#)

2.6. From suboptimal thinking to optimal thinking

Now you've taken full control and responsibility for your life with the right kind of superproactive mindset. The next step and the next update are there to make sure you always go for the best in life and get the best from life.

Everything that isn't the best way is called suboptimal and **everything that's best for you is called optimal**. That's why we also know optimal and suboptimal thinking, and you definitely want to update your thinking in a way that you employ optimal thinking most of the time.

"Judge a man by his questions rather than by his answers." Voltaire

If you want to engage optimal thinking, you have to start asking yourself the right questions. Only the right question can encourage your brain to start looking for the best solutions. "The best" is key in optimal thinking. When you encounter a problem or you have an important decision to make and are looking for a solution, add "the best" to the question you are asking yourself.

Examples of suboptimal thinking:

- *Why is this happening to me?*
- *Why did they give me a task, they know it's too demanding for me?*
- *What if I fail and everybody laughs at me?*
- *What should I do now?*
- *Which option should I choose?*

And examples of optimal thinking:

- *What's the best way to do this thing?*
- *How can I solve a problem in the best way?*
- *Which is the best option for me?*
- *What will lead to the best possible outcome?*

You can also replace the best with other superlatives, like: greatest (talents), highest (priority), smartest (way to work), most (profitable, productive, enjoyable, rewarding, important), maximal (output, productivity, time spent together), and so on.

The main idea is that by asking yourself the right questions, you engage the right kind of thinking that will go straight to looking for the best solution for whatever you're facing. **When you ask yourself the right questions, there is no more room for being stuck, depressed or miserable.**

With the right questions and by putting your creative potential to use, you can always find the best action for a certain situation. Indeed, an incredible and very useful update. The optimal thinking concept was designed by Rosalene Glickman, Ph.D.

- Additional reading: [Only optimal thinking leads to achieving maximum results](#)

2.7. From egotistical thinking to agile thinking

Darwin figured out centuries ago that **not the strongest survive, the most flexible ones do**. In general, we are generally obsessed with organization, productivity, creativity and innovation – maximizing strength and output. But that doesn't completely go together with Darwin's findings. And you know what happened to the strong and mighty dinosaurs.

So in order to have a superhuman mindset, you need an update **to optimize your life not only for productivity and creativity, but also for flexibility.** Now, this update is a tough one, but it's also huge and extremely important for a superhuman brain. You see, you are egotistically invested in your beliefs, convictions, goals and needs. And it hurts like hell to be wrong about something or to fail.

Wrong assumptions are the mother of all fuckups.

So many times you would rather live in a lie called “fake progress” than to actually measure your progress and the course you're on. One big defeat at the end seems much easier to cope with than taking mini small defeats upon yourself from the very beginning, enabling you to constantly adjust your course. Nevertheless, the final big defeat can be fatal, like it was for dinosaurs.

Living in a lie of “fake progress” is represented by things like doing a job you hate, staying with an abusive partner for the rest of your life just because you were in love once, drowning in debt by making wrong financial decisions and investments, suffering from low productivity and happiness levels, and so on.

In such a case, **you would rather create in your head naïve hopes that things will get better and that this is the best you can do.**

The idea behind agile thinking is pretty simple. **You consciously decide to have two different categories of actions, tasks and activities.** They either fall into “the search mode” or “the execution mode” box. You strategically decide when you search for the right thing for you (the so-called fit) and your progress is thus measured only by learning about yourself and your environment. And only when you find your fit you decide to commit and set strict goals.

When you know you're in the search mode, you don't have any egotistical expectations and you don't put in any real commitment. Wrong expectations lead to disappointments and every commitment leads to heavy energy investments, and **you shouldn't be investing before you know what you are truly investing in.** So in the search phase you just try, experiment, observe, reflect and learn about yourself and the world. The most important thing is to have no fixed ideas and no expectations at all in this phase.

If you're in a hole, simply stop digging.

In the search mode, you then make two important decisions. **Persevere or pivot?** If something works for you (relationship, job, sport, goal, commitment), you persevere and enter the execution mode. If something doesn't work for you, you pivot to something else and stay in the search mode. The criteria for making the pivot or persevere decision is the happiness index (positive emotions mean you're on the right track) and life metrics that are measuring your real progress.

And if something doesn't work for you and you decide to pivot, you have to make sure you really do learn what works for you and what doesn't. In such a case, you shouldn't make the same mistakes twice. **That is called validated learning.**

Examples of egotistical thinking:

- *I finally got a job, I'm such a lucky devil.*
- *I am so in love with that person, she's the right one for me.*
- *I will lose 10 pounds in the next two months by eating less and exercising more.*
- *There is a crisis in our industry, but I think I won't lose my job.*
- *My way or the highway.*

And examples of agile thinking:

- *I will try several different tasks to see what I'm really good at, develop my talents, prepare a list of 30 companies I want to work for, research them, somehow get involved in projects with them and after gaining real-life experience with a few different companies, convince the best company to hire me.*
- *Based on my previous relationship experience, I will prepare a persona of my ideal partner, join clubs, hobbies and online dating sites where there is the highest probability to meet a spouse with the characteristics I like, and I will date until I find the best partner for me. I know my deal breakers and I know a relationship has to develop through certain stages for me to know if they're the one for me (first date, sex, intellectual connection etc.).*
- *I will try 5 different sports and diets in the next 15 weeks to find the best one for me – the one I like, can really commit to and with which I get the best response from my body (body fat percentage, aerobic performance, energy levels etc.). Then I will permanently change my lifestyle, stick to my perfect diet daily without exceptions, and regularly do a sport I really like. I will do that with the help of a nutritionist and a personal trainer.*
- *What kind of feedback am I getting from the environment and how could I adjust my actions to get a better result? Are trends/relationships supporting my actions or not, and how can I make sure they support my course of action?*
- *What should I start doing, stop doing and continue doing to achieve my goal?*

You may lie to yourself that you are right and then the harsh reality will sooner or later show you that you are wrong. Or you can admit to yourself, from the beginning, that **you are always “wrong before you are right”**, decide to experiment and fail a lot in the beginning, but win big in the long term, because you commit to the right thing, to the perfect fit for you. With agile thinking, you make sure you aren't climbing a ladder that's leaned against the wrong wall.

- Additional reading: [The AgileLeanLife Manifesto](#)

2.8. Regret Minimization Framework

If the agile thinking update is quite pretentious, this one is simple. **Sometimes you have to make tough decisions and this update is perfect for those situations.** Examples of this kind of decisions are whether you should quit your job and start your own business, end a relationship or maybe move to another country. The Regret Minimization framework can greatly help you with that kind of decisions.

It is pretty simple to engage the Regret Minimization Framework as part of your mindset. When you have to make a big important decision, project yourself forward to the age of 80. **Looking back on your life, you want to minimize the number of regrets.** If you project yourself to the age of 80 and think about your potential regrets, it becomes a lot clearer which path you should choose.

Ask yourself: Will I regret not doing this on my deathbed?

Know that **you can move on from a failure or from a rejection, but regret always stays with you.** In other words, you can always move forward from a failure or a rejection, but you may regret not knowing. So when you're facing a tough decision, knowing this principle can help you a lot. Just make sure you're making decisions based on calculated risk (low risk and huge potential reward), and that you aren't making any stupid decisions that could destroy your life.

- Additional reading: [The Regret Minimization framework](#)

2.9. Shutting down your mind

Last but not least, probably the most important update of all – **learning how to shut down your mind**. The purpose of all the updates until now is to use your mind in a superior way. To make sure that when you think, you think big and the right way – a way to maximize your productivity, achievements, flexibility and happiness.

Nevertheless, sometimes the greatest and the most productive thing you can do with your mind is to shut it down. There are many benefits to learning **how not to use your mind and how not to think, and just be**. It's a crucial mental skill if you want to live in the present moment and if you want to be happy.

There are many activities that require you to just be and to just enjoy them, without overly analyzing, planning, reviewing or judging.

Overthinking your life, what you have and what you don't, what other people think of you, how was your performance etc., will definitely make your life completely miserable. Applying all the updates we've talked about will already help you a lot to not get stuck in overanalyzing, but sometimes the best thing you can do is to let go and stop thinking.

Here are a few such examples:

- *You usually stop enjoying relationships the moment you want to control them. And you want to control them because your mind goes crazy and starts imagining many painful things. Shut down your mind when you are with the person and just enjoy the relationship.*
- *You can't have the best sex of your life if you don't let go of your mind and thinking, and just enjoy the present moment, being yourself with all your heart.*
- *When you are exercising, shut down your mind. Enjoy the exercise, relax, stop thinking and overanalyzing. Yes, have a superior plan, do learn how to perform exercises perfectly, but also learn to let go when necessary.*

Every skill you want to master in life at some point, you have to do it subconsciously and naturally, without any thinking and overanalyzing. Like driving a car. You can do that by deliberately shutting down your mind and enjoying life in the present moment. There are two ways how to do that.

First, **find activities where you naturally shut down your mind.** Those are different things for different people, but the most popular ones are doing different kinds of sports, cooking, making love, dancing, listening to music etc. Find at least one activity where you can let go of your mind and observe how you behave and how your inner state looks like when your mind is shut down. Then practice transferring the same inner state to other tasks, activities and life areas.

The second thing you can do is to consciously command your mind to STOP.

- When you find you are overly analyzing yourself, people or situations, say STOP to your mind and choose to just be instead
- When you find yourself over-assessing how you or others are performing, say NOW STOP to your mind and choose to just do it instead
- When you find yourself overthinking life, say STOP to yourself and choose to just enjoy life and smile instead
- When you find yourself being too judgmental, say STOP and choose to just love instead

Of course you have to know very well when it's time to use your mind for an analytical task, when for a creative one, when there is a better way to think with all the updates mentioned, and you have to know when it's time to shut down your mind. **These are all the tools at your disposal, and you have to use the right one in the right situation.** It's more art than science, but with some experimenting and testing, you can get good at it quickly.

3. How to upgrade your mindset

Now you know all the updates that lead to a superhuman mindset and the most superior way of thinking. The only important question left at this point is: **how to press the update button and apply all these updates?**

Unfortunately, it's not as simple as it is with computer updates, where you just click a button, wait a few moments and updates are ready for use. There are a few big differences between updating your computer and updating your brain that you must know. Let's look at those differences and what's the best procedure (or process) to upgrade your mindset to the superhuman version.

3.1. Upgrading your mindset is a process

Updating or upgrading your mindset is a carefully orchestrated process, not a one-time event like pressing a button. To update your mindset, it takes time and a lot of hard work. You have to do what 90% of people aren't willing to do – sit down, take a piece of paper, write down your thoughts and slowly reprogram your mind with an analytical approach. The carefully orchestrated part of the process means that you have a superior strategy in place and a system for how to do it.

It's impossible to update your mindset if you aren't prepared to consistently write down your thoughts, analyze them and talk back to them with a more rational response. The only way to update your mindset is to talk back to yourself.

Every process you follow goes through certain stages, and upgrading your mindset is no different in this regard. You have respect the stages and avoid skipping them. When you follow a carefully orchestrated process, you first set strong foundations on which you can build your brain's supercomputer.

3.1.1. First you need empathy to understand what is going on with you

First, we have the empathy phase, where the name already implies that empathy towards yourself is the most important issue. You must **become more aware of your feelings, thoughts**, reactions to stimuli from your environment, and how everything is interconnected.

You also get the main idea about **what kind of dominating thoughts go through your mind and what kind of updates you need the most**. You always start updating your mind with gentle energies towards yourself, and understanding what's going on in your head and why. You must first know where you are, so you can then take the first step towards where you want to be.

3.1.2. When new thoughts slowly become sticky

The second phase is the so-called stickiness phase. In this phase, **you slowly start updating your mediocre thoughts with more superb thoughts and kind of thinking**. Your focus is on the stickiness of new, better thoughts. In this phase, you fail many times and so you need a lot of discipline and persistence.

It's a hard and tough process of ditching the old ways of thinking, taking over new kinds of mindsets, and consequently also making the first different (better) decisions with the new kind of thinking. **The biggest mistake you can make in this phase is to give up**. You have to be persistent enough that your new thoughts slowly begin to "stick" with you. What happens is that sooner or later, you don't only see changes in the way you think, but also in the way you act and make decisions. You can see the first positive results of the updates.

3.1.3. Positivity virus

The next phase is called virality, which means that **your new superb thoughts become viral and eat up all the rest of mediocre thinking**. There's a tipping point in the process, when you don't have to struggle anymore with updating every single thought, but things become quite natural to you.

The new thinking habit is finally formed and slowly you manage to completely override the previous way of thinking and acting. When you reach this stage, **there is no way of going back anymore** and you become so aware of different mindsets that you can already see the mediocre thinking in other people as well as help them with updates, if you want.

3.1.4. *Scaling new thinking all the way to the last thought*

The last phase is “reaping the rewards phase” and the scaling phase. You clearly see all the rewards you are getting from your mindset updates and thus **you scale this kind of thinking in every life area to the last possible thought.** Now you’ve become a human with a superhuman mindset.

When we talk about the process, you need to **have realistic expectations about how long the process takes.** At least a few years are usually needed to implement all the updates. But you have enough time. If you really want it badly enough, you will find a way. If not, you will find an excuse.

Phase	Realistic timeframe for completion
Empathy phase	2 - 4 months
Stickiness phase	4 - 12 months
Virality phase	2 - 4 months
Scaling phase	4 - 12 months
Total for complete upgrade	1 - 3 years

The key is to really want it badly enough. The best thing ever is to be born and raised with that kind of a superhuman mindset. The next best thing is to start working on it today.

3.2. Toolbox for upgrading your mindset

Understanding the process is important, but it's not enough, of course. We still don't know how to do the updates. You need a toolbox, and we're going to open it in just a moment. But before that, let's just overview once more what the process of upgrading your mindset is. You follow the process by sitting down several times every day, taking a piece of paper and using an analytical approach to change the way you think and interpret the world and what's happening to you.

Let me emphasize that one more time – **you have to stop several times a day, take a piece of paper and do different mind exercises.** That isn't an easy thing to do. It takes an enormous amount of time, effort and dedication. So again, you must want it badly enough. Nothing great was done overnight, neither Rome was built nor can your superhuman mind be. When you do sit down and decide to do mind exercises, you have to choose the right tool from your toolbox.

There are several tools to use that can help you do the upgrades. You have to enter the search mode, test all the different tools and find out what works best for you. You can, of course, combine several different tools to accelerate progress. Your job is simply to play and measure progress.

We know two general approaches: cognitive and behavioral one.

The cognitive approach means that you first analyze your emotions and thoughts, then reframe them in a more positive way. More positive thoughts lead to a better mindset and more positive actions, and more positive actions lead to a more positive life and results.

The second approach is the behavioral one. This approach means that you change your behavior, and by changing your behavior you change your actions and consequently your mindset also follows by becoming more positive and of a higher quality. The best way is, of course, to use both approaches.

The toolbox for upgrading your mindset consists of the following tools:

Paying more attention to your emotions and thoughts

- Mental biofeedback
- Observing your body language
- Happiness index
- Observing your environment

Emotional accounting

Cognitive reframing

- Cognitive reframing exercise
- Holding your frame

Other cognitive exercises to accelerate your mindset updates

- Asking yourself the right questions and digging deep
 - 5 whys
- Self-reflective journaling
- Creative Visualization
- Positive affirmations
- Transformational vocabulary
 - Optimism ratio
- Meditation
- Breathing exercises
- Changing your body language

Behavioral conditioning and accounting

- Behavioral conditioning (operant or instrumental conditioning)
- Behavioral accounting

The final updates – increasing your competence level

3.3. Paying more attention to your thoughts and emotions

It's extremely **hard to constantly identify the quality of your thinking and your thoughts one by one**, because there are just too many negative thoughts and cognitive distortions in the beginning and new ones are constantly appearing. Nevertheless, you can easily start to examine your way of thinking when mediocre, negative or any other toxic thoughts concentrate.

How do you know that there is a concentration of bad thoughts that lead to a poor mindset? Your feelings.

Your (negative) emotions are nothing but a consequence of the way you look at things – at yourself, the situations you are in, what is happening to you, other people etc., and by your internal dialogue about all these things (focusing on positives or negatives). If your understanding and the way you look at things is accurate, your emotions will be normal. If your perception is twisted and you look at things with the wrong mindset, your emotional response will be abnormal – negative.

Thus the first step is to **sit down and closely examine your thoughts when you have severe negative feelings**. Every bad feeling you have is the result of a poor mindset and all self-defeating emotions are caused by an irrational internal dialogue. It may sound unbelievable, since we are dealing with the mind updates (brain) and not feelings (heart), but your emotions are where you start updating your mindset.

If you try to analyze and overwrite every single negative thought in the beginning, you would simply go crazy. But what you can do is to start by only counting your negative thoughts to be more aware of them and **analyze what goes on in your head when severe negative thoughts concentrate**.

Exercise:

Every time you are upset, depressed, angry or you are experiencing any other kind of severe negative emotions, sit down take a piece of paper and write down all your thoughts. All of them, without any censorship.

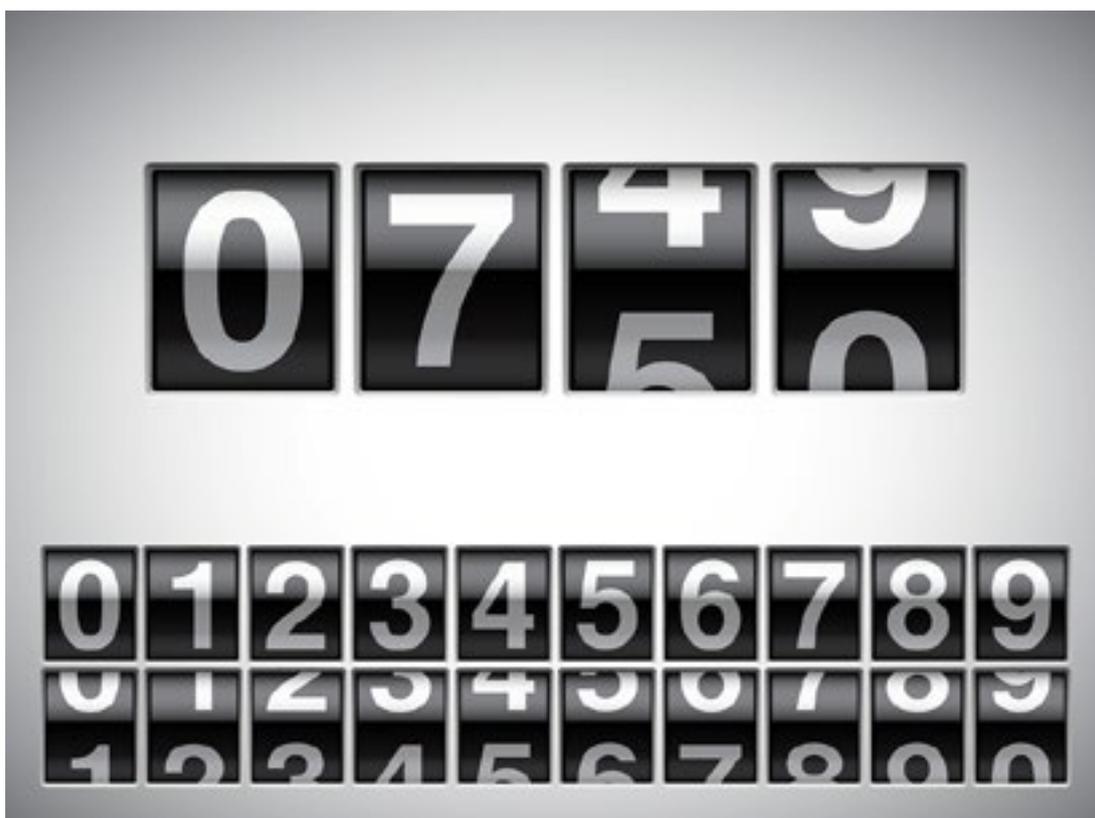
3.3.1. Mental biofeedback – Count the number of negative thoughts

The easiest exercise to start with is the so-called mental biofeedback from cognitive therapy. The idea of the exercise is to **start counting your toxic thoughts** – all the thoughts that aren't aligned with the superior mindset we've talked about. Just counting, nothing else. This way, you become more aware of your toxic thoughts and you'll be even more surprised at how many of them you have and how poor your thinking and mindset probably are.

You simply buy a counter to click or draw a line in a notebook every time you catch yourself with a thought that isn't part of the superhuman mindset. After counting your negative thoughts for a few days, you can slowly take a step further.

- Step 1: Only count toxic thoughts for a few days or even weeks
- Step 2: Count toxic thoughts but also write them down
- Step 3: Count them, write them down and categorize them (what kind of toxicity it is)

Soon you will learn to identify any kind of toxic thinking and poor mentality, and categorize thoughts very quickly. **If you follow this (empathy) process for a few weeks, you will learn to identify and categorize thoughts in the blink of an eye.** And when you understand something, you can start changing it.



Here is once again a summary of all the different toxic thoughts and categories of poor mindsets that need to be upgraded to a more superior version:

Toxic mindset	Superior mindset
Fixed mindset	Growth mindset
<p>Scarcity mindset</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional scarcity • Intellectual scarcity (lack of ideas) • Intimate scarcity • Social scarcity • Opportunity/competence scarcity • Material scarcity 	Abundance mindset
<p>Negative thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All-or-nothing thinking • Overgeneralization • Mental filtering • Discounting the positive • Jumping to conclusions • Magnification and minimization • Emotional reasoning • Should statements • Labeling • Personalization and blame 	Positive thinking
<p>Problem-oriented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blaming others • Can't attitude 	Solution-oriented
Inactive & Reactive thinking	Proactive thinking & Superproactivity
Suboptimal thinking	<p>Optimal thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The best • The greatest • The highest • The smartest • The most • Maximal • Optimal
Egotistical thinking	Agile thinking
Indecisiveness	Regret Minimization Framework
Overthinking & analysis-paralysis	Shutting down your mind
Making bad decisions, big and small	Making good decisions, big and small

3.3.2. *Observe your body language*

Your inner state, emotions and thoughts are greatly expressed through your body posture. Your body language is a big sign of how good your mindset is. A positive emotional and mental state shows in a smile on your face, straight posture, and slow but confident movements. You take up space and move towards your goals.

A negative emotional state together with toxic thoughts and a toxic mindset shows in poor posture, frowning, eyes directed to the floor, anxious movements, and so on. **When you find yourself using poor body language, that's an excellent opportunity to sit down and analyze what's happening in your head.** Poor body language must become a trigger for doing all different kinds of exercises.

- When you catch yourself frowning, stop and start writing down your thoughts
- When you catch yourself with a sad face, stop and start writing down your thoughts
- When you catch yourself with crossed arms or not looking people in the eyes, stop and start writing down your thoughts, it doesn't matter if you're in the middle of the street

We'll talk about that later, but an additional exercise that can help you update your mindset is the so-called reverse programming. **That means changing your body language will help you do and maintain new updates.** Positive body language will lead to more positive thoughts. So when you're doing updates (following the process with the toolkit), help yourself by paying attention to your body language and change it as you are changing your way of thinking – in a positive manner.

3.3.3. *The happiness index*

The idea of the happiness index is pretty simple. **You have an uncomplicated chart with different indicators showing how happy you are.** Every day, when you wake up, go to sleep or while working, you put an indicator on the chart, marking how you're feeling.

The main advantage/point of the happiness chart is to **never forget about yourself or lose awareness of how you're really feeling, even if you're very busy.** You put yourself first. When an indicator goes below 8, you start closely observing your thoughts and writing them down.

- [Read more about the happiness index](#)

3.3.4. Observe your environment

From my observations, I've seen again and again that **the environment I operate in (especially when it comes to the closest relationships) reflects my inner state.** The main reason for that is that emotions are contagious and we tend to connect with people who have the same energy vibrations as we do. What exactly do I mean by this?

You will always look for an environment that's familiar to you. If you were raised in a toxic environment, you will try to find such an environment in your adult life. And because you had toxic relationship in your toxic youth environment, you will later look for toxic relationships, especially the key relationships in your life. Subconsciously, you always look for people and situations that are deeply familiar to you, because you don't have any other experience. Without any other experience, you don't have the reference points to look for something else, something more positive.

How people are acting around you usually resonates with your current inner state, even if you're probably not even aware of it. If you are emotionally stable and strong, you have a positive effect on your environment and make it more stable and strong. A toxic environment will try to make you into a more toxic person as well. It becomes a power struggle of who is stronger. And if you aren't strong enough, a toxic environment only makes you more toxic.

For example, If I find that my girlfriend is irritated about something, there are two ways of how I can respond. I can calm her down just by being emotionally strong. But if I'm not in such a state, I also get irritated or start talking too much or get anxious or in some other way take over her negative emotions (emotions are contagious, as mentioned). Interestingly, if I get easily irritated, I usually also find out with consistent analysis that my inner state was already irritated before I started spending time with her, I just didn't notice it. In other words, I wasn't in emotionally stable state.

If people around you are stressed, hectic, angry, are experiencing any other similar toxic and negative emotions and thoughts or are giving you a headache, take a few minutes off and analyze your inner state. Start the analysis with the premise that the outside environment only mirrors the inside environment and **when you sense that your environment is imbued with negative vibes, try to figure out if you're also in a negative emotional state and why.**

If being in a momentarily toxic environment makes your inner state toxic, ask yourself why you so easily overtake the toxic state of your environment. That means your thoughts and mindset were easily corrupted by others. In such a case, you need to be more self-centered, you need to make the superhuman mindset stronger. Nevertheless, observing your environment in relation to yourself is a great way to become more aware of your thoughts and your inner emotional states.

Here's another important fact when we talk about your environment. **A healthy person in a toxic environment will always become a toxic person, sooner or later.** In the long term, you can never be strong enough to not overtake at least some vibes from your environment. Relationships and the environment you operate in have a great influence on your mindset, behavior and potential. That's why you can often hear advice like "you become the average of the five people you spend the most time with" or "never work for a boss you don't respect and who is a bozo" and "make sure you work in a dream team".

And as we've talked about in the superproactivity update, **you are the one choosing your environment and you are the one choosing your relationships.** If you are in an extremely toxic environment and relationships, why don't you start making better choices?

Now you probably know the answer. You have to update your mindset to change the environment you operate in. **That means your current environment also mirrors the quality of your thinking.** So analyze your environment and your choices on where you work, who you spend time with etc. and you will better understand your mindset and what needs to be upgraded. I know, it's impressive how much you can learn from your environment.

*"The world is a tragedy to those who feel, but a comedy to those who think."
Horace Walpole*

3.4. Emotional accounting

Now you know how to identify your toxic thoughts - (1) analyzing severe negative emotional states, (2) doing mental feedback, (3) observing body language, (4) having happiness index and (5) analyzing your environment. The more you practice, the easier it will be to recognize them. After a few months, it will become natural for you to identify and categorize different kind of toxic thoughts on the fly. **The next important question in the process is what to do with all these toxic thoughts.**

The answer lies in the so-called emotional accounting (from cognitive therapy the book Feeling Good). To more easily explain how to do emotional accounting, we will call all toxic thoughts that appear in your mind your inner critic. **All different types of negative and other toxic thoughts come from your "inner critic"**, the part of your mind that's dark, negative, evil and has crazy monkeys as his servants.

Every toxic thought that appears in your head comes from somewhere. And it comes from this inner critic. It's like having a negative, unloving, rigorous grumbler in your head, blocking you from being happy, proud, powerful and going forward.

Calling this negative part of your mindset an inner critic is perfect, because it always finds a way to criticize you, others, the situations happening to you, or it finds a reason why you should feel sorry for yourself, not act and focus on how miserable your life really is – even if it's not.

Emotional accounting simply means talking back to your inner critic in a very systematic, structured and analytical way.

Emotional accounting is a three-step process:

1. After training yourself to recognize and write down toxic thoughts as they go through your mind with different exercises we've mentioned,
2. in the next step you learn why the thoughts are distorted (you categorize them and analyze how they make you feel), and then you
3. practice talking back to them with the goal of developing a more realistic self-evaluation system or an evaluation of the situation you are in.
4. Talking back to your inner critic is key.

Talking back to your inner critic is key. To perform emotional accounting, all you need a simple table. The table has six columns. Here they are:

1. Toxic thought going through your head (automatic thought, self-criticism)
2. Type of negative feeling it's causing and the intensity of it (emotions)
3. Categorization of the toxic thought
- 4. Performing a rational response to the toxic thought (self-defense)**
5. New intensity of the negative feeling (outcome)
6. Additional ideas for thinking and acting better

You simply go column by column. When categorizing thoughts, you can only focus on cognitive distortions or all the different mentioned categories of negative thoughts. But keep in mind that you can't categorize every single thought in the same way. Stay flexible and improve the system so it works in your favor.

By far the most important is the column where you perform a rational response to the toxic thought. That's the part of emotional accounting you need to pay the most attention to.

Let's look at an example of the emotional accounting.

1. *I'm making so many grammar mistakes, I am really poor writer*
2. *Anger, frustration (80%)*
3. *Overgeneralization, self-labeling, fixed mindset, reactive thinking, problem-oriented*
4. *Even if I still make quite a lot of grammar mistakes, I have great ideas for articles, my style is improving and so is my grammar, and I get a lot of positive feedback on my articles*
5. *Anger, frustration (20%), feeling proud of myself (60%)*
6. *The best way to improve my grammar is to have a great proofreader, read as much as possible, and do a few grammar exercises.*

3.5. Cognitive reframing and holding your frame

The greatest power you always have in life is changing the angle of how you look at things. In the end, **the ultimate control you have is the control over your judgments and your mental state** or, in other words, how you interpret the things that happen to you.

Cognitive reframing (or cognitive restructuring) is a way of viewing and experiencing events, ideas, concepts and emotions in more positive alternatives. **A frame is the filter through which you perceive reality, and you can always find a new better frame.**

It's an exercise similar to emotional accounting, only with this tool you don't only describe reality more accurately, you also find a new, more positive context to what is happening to you.

Cognitive reframing is also a type of exercise you should do in a simple table, with three columns, called ABC to remember it more easily:

- Antecedent: An event that has happened to you
- Belief: An underlying belief and how you see the event
 - *Reframing: Finding a better mental filter and context*
- Consequence: How you feel about the event (a specific emotion(s) on a scale from 0 – 100%)
- Additional ideas for thinking and acting better

The point of cognitive reframing is to **find an angle (filter) that can be supported by constructive underlying beliefs, that don't cause negative feelings** and enable you to keep all the necessary personal power in your own hands.

Now, the most important thing is that your reframing is still based on truth. You absolutely shouldn't start lying to yourself or suppress feelings or use the tool in any other negative way. Remember the fake feeling of progress? Make sure you don't go in the wrong direction.

Here's an example:

- *I just lost my job.*
- *I'm worthless and nobody will employ me.*
- *Anger (90%), depression (80%).*

And now the same situation by doing cognitive reframing:

- *I just lost my job.*
- *My boss was a bozo, I wasn't learning anything new anymore, so it's time to find a better job (that must be the truth backed with hard-data evidence, not solely your opinion).*
- *Anger (20%), Depression (30%), Anticipation (70%)*
- *The best way to find a new better job for me as quickly as possible is to write down the names of 10 managers I know, update my resume, prepare 100 ideas for each company and send the documents to managers.*

With cognitive reframing, you **must turn a problem into an opportunity, weakness into strength** (by matching or converting), hurtful actions of others into understanding why they're doing that instead of being a victim or engaging yourself in fights, and so on. But again, the idea is to turn a problem into an opportunity and ACT, you mustn't only make feel yourself better.

When you work with frames a lot, you soon realize that things are repeating themselves – how you see them and interpret them. **These are called schemas (filters), and they're simple mental structures we use to organize how we see the world around us** – from what we notice to how we interpret things and, in the end, act. We have schemas practically for everything. They also help us with predicting and forecasting. By doing a lot of positive cognitive reframing, you will slowly update your schemas and consequently your overall quality of thinking in all the ways we've talked about.

3.5.1. Holding your frame

When you do cognitive reframing you will soon see that **your mind constantly strives to slip back into your previous toxic thinking**. "Mind monkeys" are like little kids constantly testing the limits and trying to wander off and bite you in the ass along the way. There is always an internal battle when you start updating your mind and the bigger newbie you are at these things, the more you have to fight strong and not give up.

That's why you need another concept called holding your frame. When you do cognitive reframing and see the reality in a more positive way, hold to it strongly. **Don't let it go for even a second. Don't slack off; hold your frame no matter what.** No retreat, no surrender. If you don't stubbornly hold to your new positive frame, you will lose it and you will go back to your previous thinking. So every time your mind tries to wander back to hurt you, consistently hold your new positive thought in your head. You have to be stronger than the "mind monkeys" and sooner or later your mind will give up; and you will be reborn with a completely new mindset and a much happier life.

3.6. Other cognitive exercises to accelerate your mindset updates

There are several other exercises that can help you do your mindset updates or speed up the update process. But please note that **these exercises are only additional help**. Without emotional accounting and behavioral conditioning, it's quite hard to achieve the same results. Nevertheless, if you are extremely motivated, adding these exercises may significantly benefit you.

Again, you have to **test and see for yourself what works best for you**. Since this eBook is already very long, we will only scratch the surface of different principles and exercises, but you can find additional resources and guidance on the AgileLeanLife blog or in many other books and blogs.

3.6.1. Asking yourself the right questions and digging deep

As we saw in the “optimal thinking” update section, **asking yourself the right questions can encourage completely new ways of thinking**. By asking yourself the right questions, you can direct your mind into a completely new direction.

So if you do the optimal thinking update properly, the second you catch yourself having toxic thoughts, mindset or thinking, you should ask yourself a question that will lead your mind into finding creative solutions and acting.

Here are examples how you can ask yourself the right questions:

- What's the best way to do this thing?
- How can I solve a problem in the best way?
- Which is the best option for me?
- What will lead to the best possible outcome?
- What would the best solution look like?
- What is the best opportunity in my life right now?
- Who is the best person to help me make progress in life?
- What is the best location for me to work?
- What is the best way to minimize waste?
- What are my best skills that I can offer to the market?
- What is the best company for me to work for?

3.6.1.1. The 5 Whys method

Another exercise you can do the simple question “why” enough times. 5 Whys is a simple technique frequently used in business to identify the cause of a problem and not only deal with the consequences.

If you want to get rid of the consequences for good, you have to get to the root of the matter. You can identify the real cause by asking yourself “why” several times in a row. It’s a way of identifying your deeper volitions and why you behave in a certain way.

Here’s an example:

- *I like geeky superhero movies. Why?*
- *Because good always wins despite an inoperative formal protective and legal system. Why?*
- *Because there is “someone” more competent to protect the victim from the bad. Why?*
- *Because no one deserves to be a victim and be bullied by others. Why?*
- *Because I know how awful it feels. Why?*
- *Because I experienced domestic violence as a child.*

With this kind of an analytical exercise, you can **dig deep to better understand where your thoughts really appear from** and what kind of underlying convictions support them. Start by asking yourself “Why do I think like that about this situation?” and then continue asking yourself why? so many times until you uncover the root of the problem.

You can use the same principle to identify many root causes – why you think as you do, why you feel or act as you do, why you behave a certain way with certain people, and so on. You will often find that the root cause of your thinking is something completely different from what you initially thought. Very often you will be surprised at what your real emotional issue is. **You just have to be willing to accept the truth.**

3.6.2. Self-reflective journaling

One really awesome way **to be more in touch with yourself and identify the nature of your thoughts faster** is to keep a journal. A self-reflective journal is not about your day and what happened, but about your thoughts, your perspective, your feelings, your words, your actions and about the feedback from your environment.

Keeping track of your thoughts and actions can greatly help you with **identifying why you acted like you did, what the result of your behavior was** and what were the accompanying feelings. Keeping a self-reflective journal is about becoming aware of who you are, your true desires, identifying your cognitive distortions and then reframing them with emotional accounting, and so on.

Make writing the self-reflective journal a part of your morning or evening habits. And when you're writing the journal, **make sure you're asking yourself the toughest questions possible.**

Self-reflection is about asking yourself thought-provoking questions so that you can develop a deeper level of understanding yourself.

3.6.3. Creative Visualization

The concept of visualization is pretty simple. **You use the power of your imagination to create visions of what you want in life and how you will make it happen.** You play a movie (or imagine pictures) in your head of what and how you want something to happen. It can be a goal you want to achieve, a performance you want to execute, behavioral changes you want to make, and so on.

You can, for example, visualize your life with your new mindset and that will encourage your new inner state to become a permanent part of you quicker – you can visualize yourself being positive, determined, having a better mindset and consequently making the right decisions. Visualization can also help you with behavioral conditioning, where you visualize your new behavior as part of your new mindset.

Visualization is a great tool with which you can change your internal mental processes, but you must also reinforce it by acting in a new direction. Visualization is definitely a tool that can help you with much more than just updating your mindset. It can help **you make an identity shift and boost your self-confidence** by clearly imagining the outcome you want and how you will perform to achieve it.

Last but not least, visualization can help you **adjust your inner state to a new vibrational level** and attract the right people and opportunities into your life. When you expect good, good things do happen to you. That is part of a superior mindset.

3.6.4. Positive affirmations

Affirmation is a form of positive self-talk. **The point of affirmations is to help you think more positively or focus on positive things as well as to purify your thoughts.** The idea is pretty simple: you write down different positive statements about yourself and repeat them over and over again. With repetition, they become a part of your new mindset and new thinking. You can also find many examples online.

Affirmations are quite criticized and used as a way to mock the “personal development” community – *you know, making fun of someone for looking at themselves in a mirror and repeating how awesome they are.* Affirmations are definitely no magical cure, like any other tool isn't, but you can try them and if they work for you, why not use them.

If you don't know where to begin, I suggest you buy Louis Hay's book called *Heal your body*, find your body's weaknesses and injuries that you suffer from, and see the probable psychological cause and affirmations that can help you with that. In my case, the connection was quite accurate. But if you don't believe in that kind of stuff, just skip it. The idea is to try as many tools as possible and then use what works best for you.

3.6.5. Transformational vocabulary

One of the huge areas of neuro-linguistic programming is proper use of your vocabulary. **Several studies have shown that successful people have a larger and different vocabulary from average.** By improving your vocabulary, you can express yourself more precisely, you sound smarter, you can write or dictate more quickly and descriptively, you understand things better and enjoy many other intellectual benefits.

Thus improving your vocabulary can greatly improve the speed of your mind updates. And using the right kind of words definitely reflects a superior mindset; and not only that, **using the right words has a big influence on you and how you perceive your life.**

Here's an example. Let's say that you just came from a holiday trip and you really enjoyed it. You can describe the holiday to yourself or to others in various ways, but here are two extremes:

- *“The holiday trip was great.”*
- *“The holiday trip was excellent, awesome and outstanding. I really enjoyed it”.*

Reading the second sentence wants me to pack right now and go on holiday. This is how you empower yourself and see your life in the right way. Similarly, **you can describe negative situations in a more natural way.** Instead of saying “The date was really a disaster, we didn’t find a connection and I think that s/he finds me weird”, you can just say “The result of the date wasn’t that interesting”.

Using the right words (the so-called power words) in general talk is an important part of having a superior mindset. **Frequently using power words can greatly help you hold the right mental frame** as well as avoid cognitive distortions or thinking in a suboptimal way. To simplify, if you want to be successful, you have to learn the language of successful people and then put it to use.

One great way to update your vocabulary in a positive way is that you simply **decide to eliminate certain words and phrases from your vocabulary.** These may be phrases like: *I don’t know, I’ll try, I can’t, I don’t have money, I have problems, I have to (-> I want to, I get to), but (-> and) and many others.* If you consciously stop using these kinds of words, your mindset will absolutely be much clearer and much more positive.

The present use of language can be a fairly accurate predictor of future success.

You can also add more power words into your everyday vocabulary use. Examples are **words like absolutely, fantastic, certainly, let’s do it, wonderful etc.** It’s no secret that successful people use more powerful and optimistic words than average people. And pessimistic and depressed people use a lot of pessimistic, negative and weak words. So change your words and your mindset will change.

Choose your words very carefully!

3.6.5.1. Optimism ratio

I know it’s kind of hard to analyze how good your vocabulary is. Thus, there is a really good exercise you can do to assess the quality of the words you’re using and how advanced your mindset is.

In the first step you need to do the following:

- Take the last three articles you've read (news, blog post, whatever).
- Open your email client and copy-paste the last five emails you've written to a word processor.
- Write down and describe the last two things you remember that you were thinking about, using the same words that were going through your head.

Put all the texts in the same place and print them. You should have ten texts altogether (three articles, five emails, two descriptions).

Now take a red and green marker. **In all ten texts, search for positive and negative words.** Negative words are words like *fear, confused, don't know, angry, death, concerned, risk, violent, missed, payback, buried, bombard* (I found these by opening an online news site). Positive words are words like *takes lead, comeback, succeed, adds, new, spark, signed a deal, stunning, beautiful* etc. (words from the same online site). Mark all the positive words with the green marker and all the negative words with a red marker.

You have to take context into consideration and, of course, it's completely your individual estimation if a word is a positive, a negative or a neutral one. However, this is not an exercise that has to be done with mathematical precision, the point is to get a general idea of the vocabulary you use and what kind of information you feed your mind with (based on your personal infostructure).

Now count the number of positive words and negative words. Then calculate the ratio between positive and negative words with the following formula: Optimism ratio = Positive words / Negative words. If, for example, there are 5 positive words in the text and 15 negative ones, the ratio is $5 / 15 = 0.33$.

$$\text{Optimism ratio} = \text{Positive words} / \text{Negative words}$$

- If the ratio is higher than 1, the language is optimistic.
- If the ratio is lower than 1, than the language you use and read is obviously too pessimistic and you must work on improving the language you use and the quality of the content you consume.

If you need more input to do the analysis, take more texts. Articles you've written, what you post on social networks, the TV shows you watch etc. You can very quickly grasp what you're feeding your mind with. And you know the rule: garbage in, garbage out.

3.6.6. Meditation

The most traditional and popular way to train and control your mind is meditation. **It's scientifically proven that meditation helps you a lot with relaxation and taming your mind.** Actually, your brain physically changes with regular meditation and increases your capacity for creativity, focus and managing anxiety.

I know so many people who claim that meditation changed their lives, and how they learned to think better and more purely by regularly meditating. You can find many different forms and types of meditation, but for a busy lifestyle, **Transcendental Meditation**, which you practice for 20 minutes twice a day, is quite popular and probably the best fit. The Headspace app is also a great start. Make meditation part of your morning kick-off routine.

3.6.7. Breathing exercises

Much like there is a strong connection between your thought and body language, so **there is a strong connection between your thoughts, feelings, and breathing.** If you are calm, focused and in a mindful state, your breathing will be deep, slow, gentle and come out of the belly.

On the other hand, if you are experiencing negative emotions, your breathing will be shallow, fast and come from the upper part of your body. Like you see in the movies when a crisis occurs, people who panic are always instructed to take deep breaths first.

Calm belly breathing = calm thoughts = the right kind of mindset.

It may sound strange, but **many people don't know how to breathe the right way**, not only when a crisis occurs but in general. Make sure you aren't one of them, because that causes a much more stressful life, with lots of negative thoughts and anxiety. Shallow breathing absolutely hinders the right kind of thinking.

Online, you can find many resources on why proper breathing is important, but you can start with two simple exercises explained below and then continue with more advanced techniques: **1-4-2 formula and belly breathing.** Google them.

3.6.8. Body language

There is **a great connection between your posture, general body language, thoughts and emotions**. I know this very well, because my body posture was catastrophically bad for years and I'm still working hard on it. And the better posture I have, the purer my thoughts are.

Body language always clearly shows what's happening inside a person. By changing your thoughts and emotions, your body language changes but the opposite is also true. By positively changing your body language, you can positively influence the way you think and the way you feel. So when you find yourself in a defensive or poor body posture, change it, and you will influence your thoughts more easily.

Do the following and you will positively influence your thoughts by changing your body language:

- Stretch and improve your body posture (straight, shoulders back and down, head up)
- Don't be afraid to stand tall and take up space
- Stop frowning and put a smile on your face
- Keep your arms relaxed at your side, don't cross them in front of your chest or put hands in your pockets
- Make eye contact with whoever you are talking to
- Do a power pose if necessary (like Superman or Wonder Woman)



3.7. Behavioral conditioning (operant or instrumental conditioning)

Everything we talked about so far falls under the category of thought conditioning (except breathing exercises and body language, which are somewhere in between). The second type of approach towards a better mindset comes from a completely different angle, we could even say the opposite angle. It's called behavioral conditioning.

If the thought conditioning approach first takes into account your thoughts with the premise that improving your thoughts should lead to a better outcome, **behavioral conditioning suggest you tackle your actions directly, not minding your thoughts at all.** By changing your behavior, your thoughts will be forced to change themselves or even if not, the only thing that matters is keeping the right behavior, new habits.

Motivation always follows after you perform an action for a certain period of time.

Here's an example. Let's say that you want to save more money.

Thought conditioning would mean that you start with your mindset. You first become aware that even if you are currently not a saver, you can become one by improving yourself. Then you tackle your beliefs on why it's so hard for you to save money and reframe the negative thoughts that come from your beliefs. You may enhance the process by visualizing how you put money into your bank account, and so on. By following a process and changing your thoughts, saving money should slowly come naturally to you. Actions should follow your thoughts sooner or later.

Behavioral conditioning, on the other hand, would simply mean that you don't even bother with your mindset at all at first. You simply automate paying 10% of your paycheck to yourself first, meaning that 10% of your salary is automatically transferred to your savings account and you don't touch your savings at all. You force yourself to save money, like an alarm clock forces you to wake up. By doing a new behavior for a longer period of time, you change your habits, your habits change how you see yourself and consequently your beliefs as well, and all that leads to your mindset being updated in the end.

The main idea of behavioral conditioning is that you **ask yourself what kind of an outcome (goal) you want and what kind of actions lead to achieving that goal.** After you define the actions, you simply apply that to your life. You force a new behavior in your life all the way until it becomes a new habit.

You ask yourself three very important questions:

- What should I start doing?
- What should I stop doing?
- What should I continue doing?

Obviously, forcing yourself into a new behavior is nothing but developing a new habit. The general opinion is that **you should practice a new behavior for around 30 days until it becomes a part of you and you start doing it subconsciously**. The trick is that by practicing a new habit long enough, your mindset also changes.

There are many ways of encouraging a new behavior (habits manipulation), and here are the best suggestions:

1. Every time you want to perform an undesired behavior, you perform a new desired behavior.
2. You eliminate a reminder (cue) that triggers the desire to perform a bad habit.
3. You set up new cues to perform a new desired behavior.
4. You increase transaction costs for undesired behavior.
5. You introduce rewards and punishments for a certain behavior.
6. You set strict limits with carefully defined minimums and maximums.
7. You leverage incompatible behaviors. You use competing commitments to your advantage (we will talk about competing commitments in the next chapter).
8. You combine different methods.

And examples for all the ways mentioned above:

1. *Instead of turning on the TV when you pick up the remote control, you decide to go read a book.*
2. *You simply get rid of the TV from your home and forget that it even exists.*
3. *You set up an alarm clock every few hours to remind you to take a break and stretch.*
4. *You delete time-wasting applications from your mobile phone. You have to reinstall them if you want to use them (high transaction cost).*
5. *You reward yourself with a fancy massage for every 10 gym visits you do, and for every gym visit you miss you donate 5 bucks.*
6. *You set up a web nanny and limit Facebook usage to maximum 1 hour a day.*
7. *You wouldn't want to drive your boss around in a messy car? If you want to clean your car more often, make sure you drive on the next business trip.*

3.8. Behavioral accounting

Behavioral accounting is very similar to emotional accounting, the main difference is that **you don't approach analysis from the thoughts-emotions perspective, but from a behavior-beliefs one.** In the same way, you sketch a table with a few columns and analyze what drives certain behavior. The main idea comes from the book *Immunity to Change* (the name of the method isn't the same as in the book) written by Robert Kegan.

Here are the columns in your table for behavioral accounting:

1. Describe the goal you have in your life, with a very detailed outcome you want
2. List the actions you do that lead you towards your goal (if any)
- 3. List all the actions you do to sabotage yourself and that goal** (every inaction or action can only lead you a step closer or a step further from your goal)
4. Identify any competing commitments and fears that lead to sabotage
5. Identify internal conflicts and underlying toxic assumptions, false beliefs and convictions that lead to such self-sabotaging behavior

Competing commitments mean that you have a goal, but there is another commitment that is more important to you and prevents you from achieving the goal. These competing commitments are usually strong emotional commitments to the kind of a personality you want to be.

For example, you want to be seen as a fair person or as a smart or funny person, you don't want to be greedy, you're afraid of being rejected, you're afraid of missing out, etc. There is something that prevents you from going after your goal big time.

The key to behavioral accounting is to identify all the actions that lead you away from your goal. In the next step, you try to carefully analyze why you're doing that and what are the underlying toxic beliefs that drive you to make bad decisions and behave in a toxic way.

What matters at the end of the day is what you do, not what you say, so analyzing your actions can tell you a lot about your mindset and help you discover competing commitments that are often only toxic parts of your inner critic.

Let's look at an example:

1. *My goal is to become a better writer.*
2. *I write and read a lot and I have an excellent proofreader that gives me feedback on how to improve.*
3. *I just write sentences as they come. As I write, I don't think hard enough about whether there is a better way to express something. I pay more attention to quantity than quality.*
4. *I am committed to writing as quickly as possible.*
5. *If I'm not fast, I'm not productive, smart and successful. If I can't write a sentence correctly the first time, I'm not good enough.*

I encourage you to test which one – thought conditioning or behavioral conditioning – works better for you, or maybe **with which one you can more easily start dealing with your mindset and updates**. Since we are talking about updating your mindset in general, which is a cognitive function, many more words in this eBook are dedicated to thought conditioning. Nevertheless, you can find many resources about behavioral conditioning online and in books.

What may work best for you, as it does for me, is combining both approaches. Updating your mindset is a lifelong process and you face many different situations in life that require a different kind of approach and a different kind of update and how you get to it. Knowing all the tools in the mind toolbox is thus very important. But before we end, we have one more very important kind of updates to cover.

“Once your mindset changes, everything on the outside will change along with it.” Steve Maraboli

4. The final updates – increasing your competence level

Updating your mindset to the right way of thinking is only one part of the equation, only one type of the updates you need. If you know your way around computers, updating your mindset is similar to updating the computer's firmware.

The second part of the equation, the other kinds of updates you need, are competence updates. That's similar to installing new programs on your computer or regularly updating the programs you've installed.

There are several updates you can install besides updating your mindset; I call this increasing your competence level:

- Increasing your creative and analytical capacity and psychological capital
- Developing and regularly using your talents
- Acquiring knowledge – mastering a certain field
- Acquiring skills – abilities to do an activity well or in a practical manner
- Improving emotional intelligence
- Improving social intelligence and communication skills
- Upgrading your values, views and beliefs
- Developing wisdom
- Combining your different competences into T-shaped skills

The higher the level of your competence, the more capable you are. This leads to many benefits – from better relationships and making more money to making better life choices and being wise. For example, the best way to earn a lot of money is to be good at something that's in high demand and low supply on the market. Becoming good at something that's in high demand is nothing but a brain update.

Updates like these are crucial for your success in life. **In today's creative society, competences are what markets and people are looking for.** The more value you can provide to the markets and in relationships, the better the position you have in life. Thus make sure that you aren't making only general updates to your mindset, but that you are also acquiring new competences and putting them to good use. When you combine both, superhuman mindset and many skills that are in high demand, you definitely have the winning combination for living the dream life you want.

You've learned something new when you do things differently.

4.1. The learning formula

The competence type of updates combined with the right mindset give you **the ability to make your brain's software even more powerful, more capable and more accurate**. In other words, you become more intelligent when you regularly update and maintain (lifelong learning) your software (brain's neurons), and being more intelligent leads to making better decisions and living a better life – the good life.

Learning updates are done based on the following formula:

- *The right underlying mindset = Firmware updated to the best version*
- *Updating your brain (learning) = Download + Process + Apply*

Downloading knowledge means getting new information about something – how things can be done in a better way, how something works or functions, how to operate a machine etc. You get a new piece of information that you didn't have before or is different from your current knowledge.

Processing knowledge means reflecting on new information, connecting it to what you already know, analyzing and deciding what you'll start doing and stop doing based on the new information, talking to other people and engaging in discussions, sleeping it over, and so on.

Applying knowledge means putting it to use. It means starting to interact differently with your environment. Becoming a better version of yourself, in action. Practically, that means that you put a new skill you've acquired to use, stop procrastinating, undertake a new adventure, make better decisions, deepen your relationships, and so on.

Here are a few examples of how you can “download” knowledge:

- Listening to lectures
- Reading
- Listening to audio books or podcast
- Watching educational videos
- Watching demonstrations

Here are a few examples of how you can “process” knowledge:

- Doing self-reflection
- Talking about a new piece of information with other people and with your mentors
- Doing research
- Planning and doing scenario-based thinking or a cost-benefit analysis
- Group discussions
- Teaching others

And a few examples of how you can “apply” knowledge in practice:

- Having real-life experience
- Changing your behavior and how you do things
- Being in the search mode – trying, experimenting, gathering feedback from your environment
- Teaching others after real life experience – for example, by starting to write a blog

All the things listed above in the “download, process, apply” section are called different learning methods. You can, of course, learn only by reading, but that means only downloading knowledge and it’s rarely enough. Because knowledge is not power, thinking for yourself and applying knowledge is power. You don’t want to only read a book on how to swim, you actually want to try swimming.

So by **far the best way to learn new things is to combine different methods listed above.** First you download knowledge in one way or another to get educated, to see other people’s experiences and perspectives, then you process it, which means you apply it to your own life situation, add your own ideas and prepare a plan and, of course, then you apply it by doing something new or things differently in your life.

Knowledge is not power. Applying knowledge is.

4.2. Make sure you keep your hardware safe and regularly maintain it

We also shouldn't forget one more important thing regarding your hardware (body, brain) and how to make it more powerful besides regular updates. **You can extend the longevity of things and how well they work with regular maintenance.** Your body and brain are no different in this regard. Take good care of your body and take good care of your brain.

Here are a few ideas for what you can do for better maintenance of your hardware:

- **Protect your brain at all costs** – wear a helmet when on a bike, use seatbelts etc.
- **Do regular physical exercise** – aerobic and anaerobic or at least take regular walks. Make sure you spend enough time in nature breathing in the fresh air.
- **Keep your margins high enough**, take regular breaks and stretch during the breaks.
- **Reduce the amount of stress** and anxiety you face in life.
- **Get enough sleep every night** – it's the number one thing for keeping your brain healthy.
- **A healthy diet means a healthier brain** – eat a lot of veggies (especially green ones), have moderate fruit consumption, and eat complex carbs, a high amount of healthy fats, low amounts of sugar and low amounts of unhealthy fats and alcohol.
- **Add brain foods to your diet** – EFAs, blueberries, broccoli, seeds, nuts, avocado etc.
- Constantly try new things, challenge yourself, travel, talk to new people, never get bored.
- **Do a creative task every day** – do art, brainstorm ideas, write etc.
- **Do brain teasers**, games and different puzzles.
- From time to time, **play a challenging video game.**
- With good time management, make sure you **work in the creative flow as much as possible every day.**

4.3. Reading

Among all the ways of “downloading” knowledge to update the “software” that your brain runs, reading is one of the best and most popular ones. Yes, **reading is one of the best ways to download knowledge**, so make sure you read a lot, every day (here you can find many ideas for how to read more).

Reading opens up new perspectives and angles to you, it enables you to familiarize yourself with how other people see the world, it enables you to acquire new skills, improve your communication abilities and much more. You can understand the world and yourself much better. That’s why most extremely successful people, no matter the industry, read; and they read a lot.

When reading in order to update your software, there are two important things to look for:

The first type of updates are the so-called “aha moments”. You read something and say to yourself, how didn’t I think of that. You discover a new, much greater way to look at the world, interpret something or find a way of doing things.

An example of such an “aha” would be – assume there is no ice to break when you want to start a debate with a stranger. You’re already connected to everyone, just show genuine interest in someone and the relationship will start to unfold by itself. There is no ice to really break, hm?

The second type of updates are different. These are no epiphanies, they’re the things you know are true somewhere deep down, but somehow you just aren’t following them. But when **you read that truth in different books over and over again, somehow your brains start to take the truth much more seriously**, and so your mindset slowly changes and with that, your words and actions change as well.

An example would be reading 15 books on money management, where in every single book you read that you should spend less than you earn.

With reading, you can easily get to both types of updates. **Exercise is one of the best ways to take care of your body, and reading is one of the best ways to take care of your brain.** Make sure that you read a lot and, even more importantly, that you regularly apply the newly acquired knowledge.

Concluding thoughts – do one update at a time

Congratulations! You've read a very extensive guide on how to update your mindset to the superhuman version. I really hope you enjoyed it. As you've learned, there are many ways for how to improve your way of thinking, so you learned that **acquiring knowledge is not enough, you also have to implement it**. So it's time to get to work and do all the homework.

The most important thing is that you don't try to apply too many updates at once. **The philosophy you should follow is "one update at a time"**. It takes months if not years to do all the updates, and even then the journey never ends. Constant improvement, including the improvement of your mindset, is a lifelong journey.

Nevertheless, let's look at a few suggestions and a rough plan for how to do the implementation that will stick with you in the long term. I suggest that in **the first week, you start with a simple exercise and then add new ones a week after** (or when you feel comfortable to do so). When you add a new exercise, don't forget that you still have to keep doing the exercises from the previous weeks. You should perform all the exercises in approximately one month, just to learn how to master them.

When you master them, don't forget about the process and stages (empathy, stickiness, virality, scaling). One thing is mastering the exercises but something completely else is doing them consistently and slowly observing how your mind shifts through the phases. The beginnings are the hardest, and then with time things get much easier. The hard road always becomes easy with time.

So follow this plan:

Week 1 – Learning to identify thoughts in general

- Buy a waiter's pad and start by writing down 5 – 20 random thoughts throughout a day - all thoughts, negative and positive ones.
- Analyze every one of your thoughts and categorize them (fixed/growth, scarcity/abundance, negative/positive etc.). Only categorize them, nothing else.
- Try to become aware of your inner critic.

Week 2 – Noticing all the negative thoughts that come to your mind throughout a day

- Buy a counter or do lines (|||||) in your notepad and start counting all your negative thoughts.
- Categorize negative thoughts. Only categorize them, nothing else. Don't be shocked how many of negative thoughts you may have and make sure you try to identify every single negative thought.
- Count and categorize!

Week 3 – Observing emotions and the environment and when negative thoughts concentrate

- Start observing your emotions very closely. Prepare a happiness index for yourself and mark your feelings every morning or every evening. Observe your body language at 5 different times in a day. Mark in your journal if your body language is positive or negative.
- Every day, describe your working and home environment in a few sentences – vibrations, atmosphere, specific relationships etc. Was it stressful or not, was it happy, depressing etc. Try to connect how the outer environment reflects your inner state.
- Observe how your negative thoughts concentrate when you experience negative emotions.

Week 4 – Talking back to your inner critic

- Print out the superhuman mindset helpers on the AgileLeanLife blog – proofs of abundance, list of questions to encourage optimal thinking, Kaizen rules etc. and always have them with you.
- Start doing emotional accounting. At the moment you feel stuck, aren't performing optimally or have severe negative emotions, stop, write down your thoughts and do emotional accounting, cognitive reframing or any other exercise.

Week 5 and 7 – Adding other exercises

- Experiment how different approaches to thought or behavioral conditioning are working out for you.
- Test different tools to improve your mindset even further – journaling, visualization, affirmations, transformational vocabulary, meditation, breathing exercises and improving your posture and body language. Test each tool for several days and pay close attention to what works for you and what doesn't.
- Make sure you increase the amount of quality content you read every day.

It will take you approximately two months altogether to master all the exercises. In this time, you should already slowly get through empathy phase. Then comes the hardest phase, the stickiness phase. **Please don't give up.** It's only a test of whether you want it enough. And I believe in you that you do. Even more, you deserve it. Stick to it and it will only get easier.

Do exercises and live a few years of your life like most people won't, so that you can spend the rest of your life like most people can't.

See yourself as a life and mindset scientist who strives to strategically and systematically do all the updates. **It's hard to be consistent with the exercises, but it's also fun and it feels great.** Enjoy performing all the exercises and be proud of all the progress you make during the exercises. Again, just make sure that you have realistic expectations.

With the mindset updates, **you will soon also see the positive changes in your life and that will motivate you even further** to really make sure your brain and its software become the superhuman version. Enjoy the journey and unlock an ability to really live the best life possible.

Last but not least, make sure you regularly read the [AgileLeanLife blog](#) for new ideas and quality personal development content, teaching you to become the best version of yourself. If you need somebody to believe in you, you're always welcome on the AgileLeanLife blog. As long as you're going to be thinking anyway, think right!

Download all the exercise files

On the [link here](#) you can **download a few templates and additional files that will help you with the mindset update process**, completely for free. Enjoy the content and put exercise files to good use.

- Emotional accounting and cognitive reframing – Template
- Happiness Index – Template
- Categorization of toxic thoughts
- Proofs of abundance
- List of questions to encourage optimal thinking

Resources for this article and further reading:

- Carol Dweck – Mindset: How You Can Fulfil Your Potential
- David Burns – Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy
- Rosalene Glickman – Optimal Thinking: How to Be Your Best Self
- Stephen R. Covey – The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People
- Robert Kegan – immunity to Change

THANKS FOR READING

Upgrade your mindset

...to the superhuman version

PLEASE SHARE AND VISIT US AT

www.AgileLeanLife.com

Blaz Kos