

STRATEGIC MINDSET



A 7-DAY PLAN TO IDENTIFY WHAT MATTERS AND
CREATE A STRATEGY THAT WORKS

THIBAUT MEURISSE

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WHO IS THIS BOOK FOR?

Do you keep hustling without having much result to show for it? Do you feel overwhelmed and unable to find the most effective task to focus on? Do you buy into the myth you must work harder to be successful?

In truth, doing more is often not the solution. Productivity is pointless without a highly effective strategy. This is why you must become obsessed with thinking strategically. Just as you have to think several moves ahead to win a chess game, you must practice thinking months, years, or even decades ahead to win at the productivity game. With the correct strategic thinking, you can save years and achieve many more of your goals than would otherwise be the case.

In other words, you must develop what I call “strategic productivity”. Each move you make must be impactful. And you must be constantly on the lookout for the one move that could leapfrog your success and massively improve your life.

So, are you interested in learning more about strategic productivity?

This book, *Strategic Mindset*, is for you if you:

- Keep hustling without getting the results you want,
- Feel overwhelmed, not knowing what to focus on to achieve your goals,
- Lack clarity regarding your goals, or
- Keep studying more but fail to take enough concrete action.

If any of the above seems familiar and you want to learn how to become a strategic producer, read on.

Your Free Step-By-Step Workbook

To help develop a highly effective strategy to achieve your goals, I've created a workbook as a companion guide to this book. Make sure you download it at the following URL:

<https://whatispersonaldevelopment.org/strategic-mindset>

If you have any difficulties downloading the workbook contact me at:

thibaut.meurisse@gmail.com

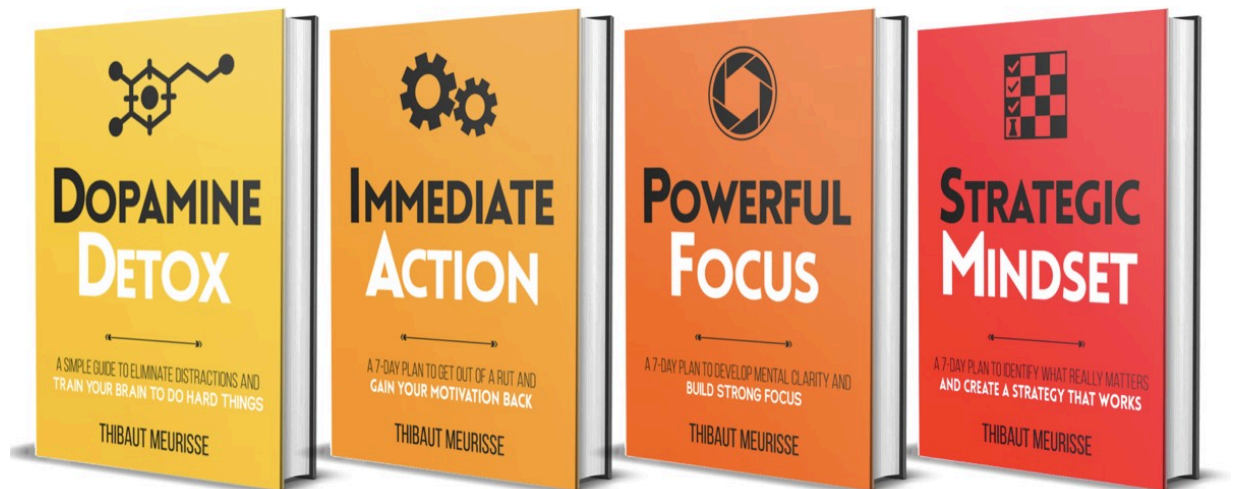
and I will send it to you as soon as possible.

Alternatively, you can also use the workbook available at the end of this book

Boost your productivity now with The Productivity Series

This book is the second book in the “**Productivity Series**”. You can check out the other books in the series by clicking the link below:

[Click here to discover the Productivity Series](#)



INTRODUCTION

In today's society, everyone is obsessed with doing more. Being busy has become a badge of honor. We want to show the people around us how productive we are. We want our neighbors to see how much busier we are than everyone else.

However, many of us misunderstand productivity. While we may be busy on the surface, we often accomplish very little. Adding more things to our never-ending to-do list doesn't necessarily make us more productive. In some cases, it has the opposite effect. Using the latest productivity app doesn't help much either. While technologies such as the internet are a wonderful source of information, or a way to learn new skills, to be effective, they must be used tactically.

People like Benjamin Franklin or Leonardo Da Vinci didn't have all the productivity tools we now have, yet they were far more productive than most people today. What does this say about productivity as we see it these days?

In this book, we'll define productivity and see how you can achieve more in less time. The goal is to turn you into a strategic producer in just seven days. To help you reach this goal, every day you'll be asked to answer questions and complete simple exercises.

More specifically, in *Strategic Mindset*, you'll discover how to:

- Use the power of long-term thinking to achieve more than you can imagine,
- Learn the right skills and develop your talents the correct way,
- Plan your year for maximum effectiveness,
- Stop being efficient and become effective instead (and why it matters),
- Think smartly to make every action you take impactful, and
- Find the right information and learn faster and better than everybody around you.

If any of the above piques your interest, read on.

WHAT IS STRATEGIC PRODUCTIVITY

Throughout this book, I'll use the terms “strategic productivity” and “strategic producer”. Before we start, let's define them briefly.

Strategic productivity means using your time in a way that enables you to achieve maximum results with minimum effort. It means making sure that whatever you're working on at any point in time is connected to your overall vision. There is nothing more wasteful than spending time on a task that didn't need to be done in the first place. As such, to become a strategic producer you must (among other things):

- Develop clarity regarding your long-term vision,
- Identify the best strategy to achieve your goals as quickly and effectively as possible,
- Develop the ability to ask yourself the right questions,
- Cultivate the ability to focus and avoid jumping from one thing to the next, and
- Learn to approach any task the most effective way possible.

In this book, we'll cover the following:

In **Part I. Planning Effectively**, we'll see how to plan effectively and how to identify the key tasks you must focus on to boost your productivity. On **Day 1**, you'll learn to plan your year for maximum effectiveness. On **Day 2**, you'll work on identifying your most impactful actions. And on **Day 3**, you'll flesh out your next 90 days.

In **Part II. Effectiveness vs. Efficiency**, we'll discover how to become truly effective each day. You'll be introduced to a powerful 7-Step Process that will ensure you approach each task the correct way and achieve tangible results (**Day 4**).

In **Part III. Thinking Smart**, you'll learn how to improve your thinking to enhance your focus and get the most out of each action you take. As you practice thinking more strategically, you'll improve your overall results significantly (**Day 5**).

In **Part IV. Learning Effectively**, you'll discover how to find the right information and absorb it as quickly and effectively as possible. You'll also discover common learning mistakes and how to avoid them (**Day 6**).

Finally, in **Part V. Managing Your Energy**, we'll discuss how to make the most of the energy you have available each day. We'll see how to leverage your peak energy to achieve more and how to segment your day for optimal results (**Day 7**).

Are you ready?

PART I

PLANNING EFFECTIVELY

You cannot hit a target you don't set. Strategic productivity is impossible without a certain level of clarity regarding your needs and goals, and without a plan to achieve them. Yet how many people lack a clear vision? How many people forget what they're actually trying to achieve, hustling every day without questioning the path they're travelling?

The management consultant, Peter Drucker, once said that efficiency is doing things right while effectiveness is doing the right things. There is no point doing things right if those things don't move you closer to your goals.

In this section, we're going to discuss the importance of planning strategically to ensure that you work on the right things each day. Strategic productivity is not about doing *more*, it's about doing less of the things that bring little results.

Note that, in this book, we'll focus mostly on one major goal. Once you understand the process, you will be able to apply the same method for any other future goal.

1. The power of long-term thinking

Your ability to think long term is one of the best predictors of success. Why? Because setting long-term goals means saying no to an infinite number of possibilities. By removing options, you can direct all your energy toward achieving your goals. Once you know where you want to go, you can reverse-engineer the steps you need to take to reach your destination. As a result, each action you take will become more impactful.

When you play chess, your goal is to win. To do so, you have to anticipate your opponent's moves. Strategic productivity is a similar process. You anticipate potential roadblocks and identify key moves. You strive to make each action impactful. Everything you do is linked to the future you want to create. As such, it is no surprise that people who spend time every day thinking of where they want to be in five years obtain better results than those who don't.

What about you? Do you think strategically, or are you merely showing up each day with no clear strategy or action plan to follow?

2. The power of compounding

Another benefit of strategic productivity is that it unleashes the power of compounding. When you keep making progress toward your goals each day, you build momentum. You accumulate small wins, which boost your confidence and increase your motivation. Each new day builds on the previous one. While results may not be apparent at the beginning, soon enough you will reach a tipping point. Things start to accelerate, and your success becomes exponential.

In his book *Atomic Habits*, James Clear writes that if you get just one percent better every day, over a year you'll be thirty-seven times more effective.

Of course, this is only theoretical, but I'm sure you get the point.

The bottom line is, to build momentum and activate the power of compounding, you need to focus on a very few things consistently over a long enough period of time.

3. The power of focus

As Bruce Lee is quoted as saying, *"I fear not the man who has practiced 10,000 kicks once, but I fear the man who has practiced one kick 10,000 times."*

When you work toward your most important goals each day, you activate the power of focus. And with enough focus, you can achieve almost anything you desire. As I wrote in *Master Your Focus*:

"Focus acts like an ax. If you try to cut down a tree by hitting it in thousands of different spots, you'll never succeed. But when you focus and hit the same spot over and over, you can cut down even the biggest tree. With laser-sharp focus you can achieve almost anything you desire."

The first scenario is what most people do. They try to fell a tree by hitting a different spot each time. It's no wonder, then, that these people fail to reach their goals. For instance, someone who learns karate will improve faster if they practice every day. However, if their training is erratic or if they try to learn tae kwon do, jujitsu and aikido simultaneously, their progress will be severely restricted. As a youngster, Michael Jordan loved both basketball and baseball but, eventually, he had to choose one sport. Had he chosen both, he would probably never have become a world-renowned basketball superstar.

This metaphor applies to many things we do throughout our lives. When you pursue two rabbits, you end up catching none, or a bird in the hand really is worth two in the bush.

In short, strategic productivity involves hitting a tree in the same spot until it falls down. It requires that you:

1. Focus on only a few goals at the same time,
2. Implement a sound strategy to reach them, and
3. Make progress towards these goals each day by taking action in line with your strategy.

DAY 1—PLANNING YOUR YEAR

Most people spend more time planning a one-week vacation than they spend planning their life.

— MICHAEL HYATT, AUTHOR AND SPEAKER.

Today, we're going to work on planning your year. This will help you unleash the power of strategic productivity. So, what would you like to accomplish in the upcoming twelve months? What really excites you? What would make a huge difference in your professional or personal life?

As we've already mentioned, the more clarity you have the better. To plan your year, start by brainstorming ideas using the question below:

What would make the next twelve months truly valuable?

Spend five to ten minutes writing down answers to this question.

Then, to further help you, visualize yourself exactly twelve months from today. Now, write down what you would have accomplished by filling in the prompt below using your action guide:

The last twelve months were truly amazing because...

Finally, spend a moment visualizing your achievement, while experiencing a deep feeling of satisfaction from achieving it.

Now that you've written down some of the things you'd like to achieve, select just one of them. This will make it easier for you to develop strategic productivity. To help you identify the one thing you'd like to focus on, answer the following questions:

- If I can achieve one thing this year, which one would make me the proudest?
- If I can achieve one thing this year, which one would make the biggest positive difference in my life?
- What's the one thing I've always wanted to do (but haven't)?
- What do I really, really want in life?
- What's the one thing that scares me the most? (The thing that scares you is often the thing you need to do the most.)

If you need more help refining your vision, refer to the previous book in this series, Book 3, *Powerful Focus*.

* * *

Action step

Using your action guide, plan the next twelve months.

DAY 2—MAKING THE DOMINOS FALL

You need to be doing fewer things for more effect instead of doing more things with side effects.

— GARY KELLER, AUTHOR OF *THE ONE THING*.

In truth, there is an almost infinite number of actions you can take to move from Point A—where you are now—to Point B—where you want to be. Your task here is to narrow down these options and identify the actions with the biggest leverage possible. Remember, you need to hit your big tree in the same spot with your ax every time before you'll be able to shout, "Timber!". This will be the best use of your time and energy.

Now, look at the primary goal you identified on Day 1. What dominos need to fall for you to reach that goal? What impactful actions will move the needle the most effectively? Brainstorm ideas, using your action guide. A sound strategy will save you a great deal of time—sometimes years. Conversely, a poor strategy will lead you to waste your time and energy, and reduce the chances of reaching your goal.

Bear in mind that oftentimes, the first ideas you come up with aren't always the best ones. But when you spend time thinking about it, you'll likely produce great answers. The success expert, Brian Tracy, recommends writing at least twenty actions we can take to reach our goal. He also suggests that the last idea is often the most effective. Later in this book, we'll discuss in greater depth how to find the right dominos. So, if you're unsure yet, don't worry.

So, what are the right dominos for you?

Here are some characteristics of the right dominos:

1. They help you **build momentum** and activate the power of compounding,
2. They entail a **paradigm shift** that changes your reality immediately and improves your results,
3. They allow you to make **significant progress** toward your goals, and/or
4. They dramatically **reduce your options**, eliminating most of the irrelevant actions you could be taking to reach your goal.

1. They help you build momentum

The right domino enables you to generate momentum and stay motivated so that you can move toward your goal consistently. In other words, the right domino can be called a "daily habit".

For instance, let's say your goal is to learn how to play the piano. Then, your domino might be to carve out time each day to practice. If you practice every day, progress over time is inevitable.