



## DAILY RITUALS

Welcome to the next lesson, daily rituals. You can find these on pages 26 and 27. To some people, ritual is a bad word. Many people react negatively to the religious association, even though most rituals aren't religious. For others, the thought of following a set predetermined action, it makes them feel boxed in. But the reality is rituals are inescapable. We're creatures of memory and habit. The only question is whether our rituals are intentional and useful, or mindless and counterproductive.

It's best to think of rituals as prescribed procedures for achieving specific results. And they don't guarantee those results, but they do set us up for the best possibility of success, much like a recipe. We naturally develop rituals around our daily activities like getting ready in the morning, or exercising, or starting work. The problem is, we're not always aware that we've created a ritual. Once we become aware though, we can optimize these rituals and take advantage of at least three significant benefits.

First, optimized rituals help put you in a mental and physical groove for high performance, whatever you're doing. This is why almost all professional athletes have deliberate pregame rituals. They want to win, and so do you. Second, optimized rituals allow you to perform at a predictably high level. The routine leaves less to chance so you can focus on performing your best. And third, optimized rituals stop you from overthinking so you're not constantly engineering and re-engineering your entire performance. This frees you up not to worry about whether you can perform, but simply on how best to do so.

Rituals are a form of self-automation. It's probably best to optimize at least four daily rituals. First is the morning ritual. This is what you do when you first get up in the morning. Second, your workday startup ritual. This is what you do when you first arrive at the office or your place of work. Third is your workday shutdown ritual. This is what you do as you prepare to leave the office and transition into the evening. Fourth is the evening ritual. This is what you do right before you go to bed in the evening. So, let's take some time and walk through each of these.



## FULL FOCUS PLANNER

First, write down your morning ritual. This could be anything that sets you up for a productive day. These are often the important but not typically urgent activities that make our lives rich and meaningful. Now, estimate how much time you expect each activity to take, then write down the total time.

Warning, take into account your season of life. I know when we had our daughter a few months ago, I was lucky to get 15 minutes of time to myself. That's very different than before we had kids and we had much more time to ourselves in the morning. If you attempt to do too much, you're only setting yourself up for frustration, which is the exact opposite of what we're trying to do here.

Next, write down your workday startup ritual. This should include those tasks you need to do on a daily basis, anything that sets you up to win. Now, estimate how much time you expect each of those tasks to take, and write down your total time. Next is your workday shutdown ritual. This should include what you need to do to wrap up your day, and enable you to hit the ground running tomorrow. Again, estimate how much time you expect each activity to take and then write down the total.

And that brings us, finally, to the evening ritual. This should be anything that sets you up for a restful night. Now again, estimate how much time you think each task will take and total it up. The key thing to note is that you already have rituals. They probably just aren't as intentional or optimized as they could be. These pages provide an opportunity every quarter for you to reevaluate your rituals, and tweak as appropriate. Now let's go to the next lesson. Your ideal week.