



# HOW TO BUILD PURPOSEFUL PRODUCTIVITY SESSIONS

**Guided Digital Journal**

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# WELCOME TO HOW TO BUILD PURPOSEFUL PRODUCTIVITY SESSIONS!

I created this workbook to support folks like myself who thrive with a little extra scaffolding when it comes to getting things done. When we plan deliberate productivity sessions, we may find more success with scoping out our projects and making progress without unnecessary overwork.

This workbook features three tools that I've found most helpful in structuring my own productivity sessions: getting clear about a purpose, planning to navigate obstacles, and refining my approach as I go. I hope you find it as helpful as I have!

**[CLICK TO WATCH THE COMPANION  
VIDEO TO THIS WORKBOOK](#)**

## ENJOY!

I hope you enjoy using this workbook. You can reach me at my email address, [Kate@KateHenry.com](mailto:Kate@KateHenry.com) with any questions.

Take care,  
***Dr. Kate***



# NICE TO MEET YOU!

My name is Dr. Kate Henry and I am a Productivity Coach who specializes in sustainable and well-being-oriented productivity. I hold an MFA in Creative Writing and a MA and PhD in Rhetoric and Composition from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. As a Productivity Coach, I guide academics and entrepreneurs to develop actionable and achievable productivity and time management practices so they can achieve short-term and long-term goals without feeling overwhelmed. In addition to my work as a Productivity Coach, I am an independent researcher and author of *Tend to It: A Holistic Guide to Intentional Productivity*.

To access more free resources similar to this guide, visit my blog, The Tending Year, at [www.TheTendingYear.com/blog](http://www.TheTendingYear.com/blog) and Substack at [KateHenry.substack.com](http://KateHenry.substack.com).

To learn more about my individual coaching and group programs, visit [www.KateHenry.com/work-with-me/](http://www.KateHenry.com/work-with-me/)



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# ACTIONABLE & ACHIEVABLE GOALS

When we set lofty, abstract goals without explicit how-to steps, the idea of actually trying to make progress might leave us feeling overwhelmed, disappointed, and buried under negative self-talk. Making each goal **actionable** and **achievable** can help us light the path forward and remain focused & calm throughout the process.

**An actionable goal** is one with explicit steps, chapters, or milestones. This means you know which tasks you need to accomplish, and the order in which you need to do them.

**An achievable goal** is one you can accomplish given your skills, timeline, access, and motivation. This means you can develop proactive plans, take acute actions to mitigate obstacles, and appropriately allocate your personal resources (more on these later!)

Once you've made your goal actionable and achievable, you can make incremental progress through intentional productivity sessions.

## PRODUCTIVITY SESSION PLANNING

A personal productivity session involves choosing a **task** that is appropriate for the **time** you have, the **location** you're in, the way you **feel**, and other **projects** and **deadlines** on your docket.

On the next 2 pages, you'll find resources that can support your planning of these sessions: A "Goldilocks Worksheet" to help you determine the best task(s) to work on, and a "Purpose Worksheet" to map out your goals for the productivity session.

# GOLDILOCKS WORKSHEET

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's goal/project:

Today's specific task:

How long will I work on this task today?

## Goldilocks Approach to Productivity

Instructions: Using your answers to the above questions as a guide, identify what would be **too little** and **too much** to accomplish in today's session. Use those bookends to identify an actionable and achievable task to work on.

To little/not enough to make real progress:

Realistic task to accomplish today:

Way too much to make progress on/accomplish today:

# PURPOSE WORKSHEET

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

What is my main purpose during today's productivity session?

What are 1 - 3 tasks I will accomplish today? What is my focus or intention for each one?

Do I need to break these down into smaller parts?

How long will I spend on them, individually or as a group?

Work session 1 goal:

What did I do during my break?

Work session 2 goal:

What did I do during my break?

What did I accomplish today?

# MAKING PROACTIVE PLANS AND ACUTE ACTIONS FOR OBSTACLES

As we work towards our goals, we'll likely run into obstacles in our productivity. On reflection, we might be able to identify personal pitfalls and develop proactive plans for mitigating them in the future. We can also set ourselves up to work through unavoidable obstacles with acute actions.

## PROACTIVE PLANS

These are plans developed preemptively to help mitigate potential obstacles. They might include lists of criteria, phrases, or questions future you can answer to make decisions acutely.

## ACUTE ACTIONS

These are actions taken in the moment to deal with obstacles or distractions. They might include redirecting energy or focus, using timers, or communicating boundaries to others.

**[LEARN MORE ABOUT PROACTIVE PLANS AND ACUTE ACTIONS HERE](#)**

# MAKING YOUR PROACTIVE PLANS

Think back to previous experiences with similar goals or tasks. When did you thrive? Struggle? Enjoy yourself? What do you wish you could have done differently?

Read over your answers and try to identify any patterns. What do you notice?

How can you use your reflection to make proactive plans for this new goal? What tools, accountability, or other supports will help you make progress in a way that feels good to you?



# DEVELOPING ACUTE ACTIONS

Use this page when you experience difficulty making progress in an action session. Try to identify what you're feeling stuck on: "I don't know where to start," "I don't want to do this," "I'm confused," etc.

Once you identify why you're stuck, check in with your personal resources. What do you actually have the energy, time, focus, etc. to accomplish right now? Choose a task that fits.

You can also brainstorm potential obstacles you might run into and make a list of acute actions that could help you if you experience them. Do that brainstorming here.

# PAUSING TO REFLECT

According to Tracy Kennedy, Lifehack's Personal Development Expert, reflection offers multiple benefits. As detailed in her article, "[How Self-Reflection Gives You a Happier and More Successful Life](#)," reflection can improve our lives in the following ways:

- Improves self-awareness
- Provides perspective
- Allows you to respond, not react
- Facilitates a deeper level of learning
- Improves confidence
- Challenges your assumptions

In addition to improving our self-knowing and presence, reflection can help us make better decisions when it comes to growth and change. Jennifer Porter, an executive coach, reports in her Harvard Business Review article, "[Why You Should Make Time for Self-Reflection \(Even If You Hate Doing It\)](#)" that:

*The most useful reflection involves the conscious consideration and analysis of beliefs and actions for the purpose of learning. Reflection gives the brain an opportunity to pause amidst the chaos, untangle and sort through observations and experiences, consider multiple possible interpretations, and create meaning. This meaning becomes learning, which can then inform future mindsets and actions.*

**On the following page are prompts for reflection after a day of work or a single productivity session.** They may lead you to start a new habit or stop an old one. You might have an epiphany and make a big change in your approach to productivity sessions. Or, you might use them as a way to get to know yourself better, without any plans to shift the ways you move throughout your days. Any of these options is great because it's up to you to decide your own purpose for looking back and looking forward!

# CHECK IN AND ADJUST APPROACH

What worked well during your productivity sessions today?

Did you go down any “rabbit holes” or get distracted during your productivity session? If so, why?

If you feel stumped about a task, use this space to journal about what’s challenging and identify a next step to help you make forward progress.

What do you want to remember when you start your next productivity session?

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

As you develop your own productivity sessions, you might find the following resources to be helpful. As with all productivity guides or suggestions, I invite you to take what works and leave the rest.

## Blog Posts and Newsletters

- [Intentional Productivity Via Menus](#)
- [What's A Personal Productivity Session?](#)
- [Evil Brainstorming is a Great Idea](#)
- [Eight Ways to Practice Slow Productivity](#)
- [The Relationship Between Physical and Mental Productivity Spaces](#)
- [Is Your Approach a Blueprint, a Recipe, or a Strategy?](#)
- [Moving Through the Stuckness](#)

## Workbooks and Worksheets

- [100 Pomodoros in One Month Workbook](#)
- [Get the Most Out of Your Personal Resources Workbook](#)
- [How to Set Actionable and Achievable Goals Workbook](#)

## One-on-One Support

- [Success & Accountability Coaching with Dr. Kate Henry](#)

