

Tab 1

How to Quickly Make Progress in Your Life

Are you in a rut?

Are you overwhelmed with endless responsibilities from your work life and personal life?

Or maybe you're frustrated that you just don't follow through on what you say you will do...

...a.k.a. you don't "walk the talk"

All of these struggles...they suck...especially if you feel like you are doing your best and there is little actual progress to show for it

Here's the thing...getting to where you want to be in your life is kinda difficult...

...but it IS simple

Everyone has their "method" for success...

...over the past 10 years, I've seen & studied A LOT of so-called "secrets," "formulas," and "rules" from hundreds of books, courses, and coaching programs...all those "methods" claim they will bring success to people's lives

There's a lot of amazing information out there on the internet that you can find right now, so I won't add too much to it...

...however, as I applied these different "methods" to myself & when helping others, I noticed there are some patterns and principles that overlap across all of these "methods"

"When you first start to study a field, it seems like you have to memorize a zillion things. You don't. What you need is to identify the core principles – generally three to twelve of them – that govern the field. The million things you thought you had to memorize are simply various combinations of the core principles." - John Reed

Through trial & error, the patterns and principles that I noticed led to the creation of a **system** that allows people to achieve a healthy Work-Life Balance and lasting Peace of Mind

The following guide will allow you to test this **"system"** in your own life

I don't know the unique circumstances and details of your life...

...it's impossible to know, especially if we have never had a proper 1:1 conversation

But this guide will allow you to quickly make progress in your life without spending a penny

Is following a free guide the best way to make effective progress?...

...nope...based on my own experience, observations, and just talking to various people trying to achieve Work-Life Balance...I wholeheartedly think that having support around you while you attempt to make big changes in your life is the best way to go...

...we all have blind spots...

...we can't possibly see all of our biases and challenges by ourselves

HOWEVER, if you are committed and you stay disciplined...following this free guide by yourself will bring about incredible changes in your life

I do highly recommend that you get a trusted and committed accountability partner (or a few people) from somewhere...it's probably one of the most underrated & positively impactful things that you can do for yourself

I'm going to give you a quick version of the system right now in this guide

I'm not a big fan of overcomplicating things...so here are the **four steps** for this simple system.... with an exercise or two for each...if you want to go deeper into any of these steps, we can discuss that later in this guide

Let's begin...the system is called "A CAR" & the steps are:

1. Bring **awareness** to your current immediate challenges and start recognizing wins
2. Have **clarity** on a long-term vision that aligns with your deepest values
3. Take tangible **action** and create your own productivity system
4. Integrate empowering habits & keep **refining** yourself so that you continue to evolve in the face of life's inevitable changes & challenges

Step 1 (AWARENESS):

Exercise 1: Bring awareness to current immediate challenges

Exercise Summary:

Just brain-dump every problem you think you have right now...create a list of 1-5 things you want to immediately work on...combine problems (if it makes sense...for example, you can combine "waking up earlier" and "stop binge eating late at night" to create "have better sleep habits")

Exercise Intro:

Our minds have many thoughts, ideas, memories, imaginary scenarios, etc...

...these pieces of information can accumulate over time in our heads & it can lead to overwhelm...which can then restrict us from planning our ideal future

If our immediate challenges are causing discomfort & taking up our focus...our brains are essential in a “fight-or-flight” mode where we are only trying to survive life...

...what we want to do is to get out of this “survival mode” and step into a new “mode”...a “mode” where we are actually thinking about our long-term future in an optimistic way...a future where we are thriving on a week-by-week basis

In this exercise, we are simply taking everything that is currently inside our mind and putting it on “paper”...just to get it “out of our heads”

That way, you will have a clear mind going into the next few steps of the “system”

This process also allows you to view your thoughts more objectively, maybe make certain thoughts look a little less scary...maybe you can revisit the thoughts later should you ever want to track growth or even just reminisce

Really try to understand what is bothering you right now and put it on paper.

Let's start the exercise:

1.) Choose a method:

■ Writing

- Also called journaling...you just need a pen/pencil, some paper, or a digital note-taking app (either on your laptop/desktop or phone/tablet)...
- ...you can even just use a stick in the sand

■ Speaking

- You can have similar results as writing by just speaking into a voice recording device
- The key thing for this exercise is to just capture your thoughts somewhere that's outside of your head...to make it visible/hearable (a.k.a. tangible)
- You can just open up a voice-recorder app on your phone or the video camera app

2.) Once you have chosen your method, let your thoughts free-flow out of your head and onto paper (or voice recording):

- Just write everything that's on your mind until all current thoughts are on the page/recording...you want your head to feel as empty as possible & that everything is on "paper"
- If you want, you can put on some music (you can try some lyric-less music to get "in the zone")

Once you spent at least a couple of minutes writing down everything and you have a list of items. You can send that list & any questions about next steps to support@sevincinco.com. We will personally respond, answer any questions & give free customized feedback on whatever you need so that you can make real progress in your life.

Exercise 2: Bring awareness to your wins

Exercise Intro:

As humans, we often have a hard time recognizing our wins & what we did "well"...our brains naturally try to look for what's wrong in our lives

This default brain mechanism was useful for the survival of our ancestors thousands of years ago...many researchers and academics point out that it was crucial for our ancestors to pay extra attention to dangers in our environment & to watch out for what was wrong (ex. our ancestors being attentive to any predators in the bushes such as saber-toothed cats or any big animals that used to hunt us)...it kept our ancestors alive in those times

However, in today's world, this default way of thinking (looking for what is wrong and dangerous) can cause us to be distracted from our most important goals & can lead to psychological suffering

A way to "combat" this is to start recognizing our wins & accomplishments more frequently...this starts to counterbalance our instinctual nature to look for "what's wrong"...

...and because we acknowledge the "smaller" (but necessary & significant) goals we achieved, it pushes us to start thinking bigger (we recognize our capabilities) & we start making more progress on even bigger goals

As we start recognizing & accumulating these small wins in our own lives, we will improve our confidence in ourselves...it will also lead to being more optimistic & hopeful for the future...

...this is powerful when it comes to making progress in one's life...this process (of recognizing wins) let's our brain & body know that we are on the right path & reduces friction when trying to create change...

...again, making progress and changes in one's life can be uncomfortable...we are essentially doing something new for the first time...it's brand new, it's unknown...a lot of the times our brains & bodies perceive "new" things & "new" experiences as "risky"...

...by recognizing our wins & accomplishments on a regular basis, we gradually put more trust in ourselves...and having trust in ourselves is a cornerstone for making good & effective progress in our lives...it's essentially a requirement

Let's start the exercise:

Just take 5-10 minutes **right now** to write down your wins & accomplishments from the last week and/or day

This exercise is extremely powerful if you do this consistently on a daily and weekly basis

Don't underestimate this practice just because it is simple...again, this is a cornerstone for anyone trying to start and sustain positive progress

Step 2 (CLARITY):

Get clarity a long-term vision that aligns with your deepest values

Step Intro:

You have to develop a long-term vision...without a vision, there is no way to determine whether the actions you are taking are actually making **progress**

The dictionary definition of "**progress**" is: *forward or onward movement toward a **destination**.*

If you don't have a **destination**, it's impossible to measure **progress**

Exercise 1: Set a SIMPLE "positive" vision

Let's start the exercise pt.1:

Put down (on paper) a specific vision that is exciting to you...I can't tell you that...you have to figure it out yourself

Everyone wants different things at different stages of their lives...

...the vision you write down in this exercise has to be unique & specific to you...

...we aren't looking for vague answers like "oh, i just want to be successful...oh, i just want be healthy/loved/etc."... that's very vague...

...those kinds of answers won't elicit the excitement you need to keep you moving forward & making progress in your life

Let's start the exercise pt.2:

Instead of being vague & having a blurry vision of your future, ask yourself these questions (use any of these you find relevant...or come up with your own prompts...these are meant to just get you thinking and putting something down):

"If everything went your way...you behaved optimally...you managed to find the discipline necessary to overcome the little and big obstacles in your life...where would you ideally want to be 1 year from now? ...what about 10 years from now?"

"How does your ideal week look like in 1 year? What about in 10 years?"

"If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you want to experience and accomplish in the next year? What about in the next 10 years?"

"How can you contribute to the people and communities you love? What kind of specific positive impact can you make on them throughout the next year? What about the next 5 years?"

If you took the time to answer some of these prompts, then you have a destination (it doesn't have to be perfect, but it will allow you to start making progress in your life quickly)

Exercise 2: Set a SIMPLE Anti-Vision

Exercise Intro:

Ok yes, we can use the power of life, excitement, and positive energy to create change in our lives...I do think it's the most sustainable and healthiest way to go about creating change...

...HOWEVER, using "bad" feelings as fuel to get us moving in the right direction can be extremely powerful...a person using the power of anger as fuel can be more unstoppable in creating change compared to a person just using "loveley dovey" feelings...

...the thing about using "bad" feelings such as anger or frustration is that we need to be REALLY mindful of it & use it in empowering ways for the ultimate benefit of ourselves, our communities, and the world at large...

...we need to be mindful so that we don't put ourselves on a catastrophic long-term path

“Almost every great achievement began with someone finally getting ticked off, saying “Enough!” and standing up to fight. Think of Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr...Even the quest to walk on the moon was motivated by the fight against the Russians...Everyone needs a worthy adversary. Think about it, David had Goliath, Luke Skywalker had Darth Vader. Apple had IBM, then Microsoft. Rocky had Apollo Creed...A good enemy gives you a reason to get fired up. A nemesis pushes you to reach deep and use your skills, talents, and abilities to their fullest. Having to fight challenges your character and resolve...

...Just like Rocky put a picture of Apollo on his training room mirror, find your enemy and let that image stir your blood. Get your heart pounding every morning so you will dig a little deeper, go a little longer, and fight a lot harder”

-Darren Hardy

Let's start the exercise:

Ask yourself these prompts (again, you can use your own prompts) (also, when you are looking at your Anti-Vision after you finished it or as you are writing it, you should be feeling uncomfortable...uncomfortable with the possibility of where you could end up in life if you do not take control of your life...uncomfortable with the real possibility of what would happen to your loved ones if you decide not to show up as your best self consistently)

- *Write down everything you do not want in your life*
- *What do you **not** want to look like?*
- *What do you **not** want your future to be?*
- *What do you **not** want your day to look like on an everyday basis?*
- *Write down all the possible scenarios you do not want to experience. (Ex. do you want to work in a miserable job? Do you want to be in a constant state of financial or relationship struggle?)...just think of possible scenarios you do not want to experience and write them out*
- *Reflect on the past few weeks...if you like the trajectory you are in, then skip this prompt...*
 - *...if you don't like the trajectory you are in, ask yourself: “Where would you end up in 5 years if you continue on the path you are currently in?”*
- *What are the experiences you don't want to repeat?*

The hate of something negative can be a powerful force for good...you can see it as a positive fear mechanism that kicks you into action...

...but if thinking about “fighting” or “hate” feels too uncomfortable, then start here:

- Think about what you love. What positive outcome do you want to see realized as a result of you showing up good for others and making true progress in your life?
 - Got that image in your mind?
 - Now, what's the opposite of that? What threatens that? What is the enemy of that? Who or what could stop you from achieving that outcome?...there's your enemy...there's your epic battle

Step 3 (ACTION):

Take tangible action and create your own productivity system

Step Intro:

Ok, so now if you have done all the previous steps...you should have a list of immediate challenges you want to work on (from Step 1)...

...you should also have a good list of Wins & Accomplishments from your past (from Step 1)

You should have some kind of long-term Vision for your future (either a "postive" Vision...or an Anti-Vision...perhaps a combination of both) (from Step 2)

We now go into tangibly creating change in our lives...

...we're not planning & analyzing as much here...we want to take action and actually GO...to ACTUALLY make a positive impact on ourselves & our communities

And all you need are these two things:

1. Priorities Management System
2. Time Management System

Together they make your Productivity System...or you can call it your Execution System...or Action System...whatever name resonates more for you

We all have a Productivity System in our lives, whether we consciously know it or not... usually when we were growing up, our parents, teachers & people/institutions with a perceived higher status than us would tell us **what** to do (Priorities Management) and **when** we should do those things (Time Management System). For example:

- Our parents telling us when to go to bed
- Our former teachers & the school bell telling us when to go to school or the next class
- etc.

...now, the media (social media, legacy media such as news channels, people in your social group, etc.) usually tells us **what** to do (Priorities Management System), and usually our work/job tells us **when** to do things (Time Management System)

Knowing that different forces are nudging us to do things (often not in our best interest), we must deliberately pay attention to what our actual priorities are & how we use our time...

...we have to make sure everything that we do is leading us down a path toward our ideal Vision for our unique life

If you go about trying to create positive progress in your life, deliberately thinking about your Productivity System is crucial for tangible results that actually make a positive difference

We're not here to just go with the motions & make progress for the sake of progress...**we want to make progress towards a future that genuinely aligns with your values...make progress towards what is most meaningful & fulfilling in your life**...that is why we did Step 1 & Step 2 first

Let's start the exercise:

Write down (on paper) the tools and methods you currently use for both your Priorities Management System and Time Management System....

...that's it...that will be enough to bring attention to your overall Productivity System and start making refinements that benefit your unique lifestyle

1. Priorities Management System

The most common tool used here for people is a "To-do List"...a piece of paper with a list of items...that's the Priorities Management System for a lot of people

Write down what **you** currently do & use to get tasks/projects/etc.

2. Time Management System

The most common tools used here are a regular calendar & clocks (with alarm clocks in the mix as well)...you plan ahead & get reminded of different events or significant items in relation to time (by the way, "time" is an interesting & weird concept, but we'll leave the exploration of that topic for a different essay)

Write down what **you** currently do & use to manage your time/events/etc.

Once you have written them out, you have a clearer picture of what your Productivity System is

You can begin to brainstorm how to refine your overall Productivity System to get the important stuff done effectively

You might use a tool or methodology that takes care of both Priorities and Time management (such as using Google Calendar as the only tool to keep track of your tasks/priorities as well as important events)...there's no once-size-fits-all system that is perfect for everyone...

...here is where you experiment with your preferred tools & methods

The key is to know the difference between what's important & meaningful...

... vs. what is urgent & ultimately unimportant

This step is highly unique to you...this is where you experiment with "typical" time management techniques & project management methodologies...

...I do not know your life & situation, a method I recommend that might be amazing for one person could be restrictive for another...I want this essay to be as simple as it can be...for those reasons I won't go into the details of different "productivity system" methods...

...however, if you are interested in going deeper & want recommendations on what your next steps might look like, please email support@sevencinco.com, and we'll be able to assist

Step 4 (REFINE):

Integrate empowering habits & keep refining yourself so that you continue to evolve in the face of life's inevitable changes & challenges

Step Intro:

In life, there are ups and downs...

...we might have weeks of tremendous progress, and then out of nowhere, we might fall into a slump

Life happens...

...something happens with your finances...

...something happens to your physical health...

...something happens with your family, friends, or community...

...weather, politics, random events...

...you might lose confidence in yourself because of what someone said or something you read...

...things just happen that might “throw you off” your A-game...

...that’s life

What we try to do at Seven Cinco is to help you permanently change yourself into the best version of YOU...

...a version of yourself that can withstand any inevitable challenges or changes that life presents to you...

...a version of you that thrives no matter what...and as a result, your community and the world at large benefit because of your existence...

...the world at large is better because you are showing up as the best version of yourself

There are many things that you can do to sustain your empowering lifestyle in an authentic way...

...these next 3 habits (in the following exercise) are some key things you could do...we see these 3 habits as the foundation for sustainable progress...

...I hope you take their importance seriously...here they are

Let’s start the exercise:

Try to ask yourself these questions...answer truthfully...make any necessary changes to maintain empowering habits that sustain progress in your life

Habit 1: Hold yourself accountable to your commitments (do what you say...have integrity with your word)

Questions to ask yourself: “*How will you currently hold yourself accountable to the commitments you make?*” (is it through a daily/weekly reflection/journaling practice? Is it through a mentor or coach? Is it through telling a friend, and they check on you? etc.)

Habit 2: Celebrate & recognize your wins (really give yourself a “high-five”...this comes back to Step 1... it’s mentioned here again because this habit is that important...you have to give yourself props...make your “past self” proud...help out your “future self”...be the best version of yourself right now, in the present...celebrate your wins)

Questions to ask yourself: *"How do you currently celebrate your accomplishments & progress? How do you recognize your wins?"* (Do you have a daily night-time routine where you recognize your wins? Do you pat yourself on the back when you know you follow through on something meaningful? etc.)

Habit 3: Evolve (keep improving your habits...keep reminding yourself of your best ideas and habits...maintain any good habits...replace any bad habits)

Questions to ask yourself: *"How do you make sure you are improving and evolving as a person? How do you use feedback in your life?"* (do you often check on what went well & what could be improved? Do you welcome & embrace feedback? etc.)

Final:

Those are the 4 steps...

... obviously, this isn't the full picture...there are many details here & there that would've made this guide too long...

...it's nearly impossible to go over everything here...

...but this guide, if one puts good effort, has the power to create good positive change in one's life

Again, everyone is in a unique situation in life...if you want a personalized & custom plan, email support@sevencinco.com & we can help further

If you read through the entire guide & did all the exercises...you have a very bright future ahead of you...you took action...and that's something that most people do **not** do when they read "self-help" books or "self-improvement" articles...celebrate that win because you did something pretty unique & uncommon

Thank you for reading...email us if you have any questions...have a good day!

Bonus:

So that's the system...my original plan was to just include the above guide, but I want to touch on an important point...

...you will encounter struggle or pain as you attempt to create a positive change in yourself...

...this can be financial issues...this can look like close people not supporting you with your goals & changes, a seeming lack of time in the day, a breakup with an intimate partner, etc...

...it might be a lack of focus or distraction from social media...

...maybe it is the act of ruminating about your past or anxiously anticipating the worst for the future...

...maybe that maladaptive habit resurfaces & causes you to not show up as the best version of yourself...

...whatever that struggle, fear, or pain is...find a way to reframe your perspective on it... maybe befriend the struggle or pain...look at the struggle as a puzzle to solve...look at the struggle as a monster you need to slay or to tame... try to collaborate with the struggle or pain, investigate what it can teach you to help your future self...“dance” with the struggle...call the struggle a “challenge”, call it an “inevitable side quest”, call it a “boss battle, call it a “case study”, call it a “chapter in your adventure/life”...write about it, create art, etc...

...or perhaps change the story underpinning that struggle or pain...or maybe change how you view yourself & your identity as you face that struggle or pain...or perhaps get support from others to “tackle” or “understand” this struggle...

...do SOMETHING with that struggle or pain...whatever you do, just don't let it hurt you permanently...your loved ones & communities deserve your best self...

...be antifragile...a.k.a. view struggle & pain as opportunities for growth that allow you to step into the amazing person you are meant to be...

...a person who can tangibly show up in powerful ways for others...

...use that struggle or pain in an empowering way...in a way that fuels your continuous forward progress toward your ideal future and your ideal self

You got this...

...do your best...then take one more step after that...and repeat