

Be the Master • 2020

THE GRIND™

About this Journal

This journal is intended to help you **Be the Master**, as described in the book, *Be the Master: Fourth Edition*. If you've not read the book, this will make a lot more sense if you do. It's available at <http://leanpub.com/bethemaster4>, as well as on Amazon and other outlets. Visit BeTheMaster.com for purchasing links.

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Need Help and Inspiration?

Getting through The Grind can be tough - that's why it's named what it is! If you're looking for some advice, guidance, and inspiration, it's waiting for you. You can visit BeTheMaster.com to sign up for a free, no-spam, weekly mailing list that offers tips, inspirations, and advice for creating and executing your plan to Mastery. It's at least a year's worth of emails, so it's basically like getting another huge Part of the book for free!

BeTheMaster.com also has inspirational stories shared by other readers, information on in-person seminars, and more. You can even share your own stories, and help inspire other readers.

EXAMPLES

We'll start with a sample set of pages - a monthly plan, a weekly plan, and a weekly review, along with sample "definition" pages. I actually dug back through my notebooks to kind of recreate a particular point in my own life, so that this could be as realistic as possible.

Who am I?

Define yourself. How do you want others to see you? How do you want to see yourself? When you come to the end of your life, what did it look like?

Don was a well-known technology instructor, and helped thousands of people learn new technologies that positively impacted their careers and their lives. He evolved into a reliable business leader, and played an important role in his companies' success.

Don was also concerned about people's ability to live their best life. He's known for having inspired at least a few people to examine their lives closely, and to make decisions that took them down their best path.

Don was known for his generosity with his friends and others around him. His family led an enjoyable life, filled with friends, vacations to the places they loved, and a stable home. There was always food on the table, and while Don and his family didn't have everything, they wanted for nothing.

Don was also known for his charitable work, including the founding of a nonprofit dedicated to technology education that exists still. His contributions supported education, feeding the needy, children's advocacy, and the performing arts.

What are my strengths and weaknesses?

What do you do incredibly well - almost without even trying? Would do *others* say you do well? Ask around. The answers may surprise you.

****STRENGTHS****

I write quickly.

I am very focused on meeting deadlines that I agree to.

I can be personable when I want to be.

I can be authoritative when I want to be.

I write like a speak. I use everyday language that is not opaque or filled with business-isms.

I can be counted on to be my word.

****WEAKNESSES****

I am very risk-averse.

I am uncomfortable changing my routines.

I struggle to work on teams, especially in person.

I am an introvert.

I can be overly firm in sharing my opinions.

I am pretty sarcastic.

What is my success?

Use this page to define what success looks like for you. Each thing here should directly support something from your self-definition, meaning that your success should be the way you achieve the life you want.

I will be known as an author who produces helpful, entertaining, informative, and valuable works of fiction and nonfiction. I will write pieces that I enjoy writing, and I will also write pieces that earn money, and I recognize that those two are not always going to be the same.

I will be known as a capable business leader who can lead a team toward a company's vision. I will retire from a position of senior leadership.

I will earn at least \$XXX,XXX before taxes each year. I am stating that in 2020 dollars in the United States of America, and I will adjust that number annually to account for inflation and other factors outside my control.

I will work in a field, and for an organization, that provides me ample time for family vacations and other personal time---at least four weeks annually.

What can I teach?

What topics, life skills, and so on are you able to pass on? We'll give you plenty of room - keep this updated as new things come to mind. And, as you teach things to your apprentice(s), come back and highlight those things, so you'll know you've been passing it on.

Microsoft Windows PowerShell

Microsoft SQL Server

Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager

Basic small business rules and concepts

Basic bookkeeping

Basic income tax concepts and scenarios

Basic financial investing

Common car maintenance and repairs

Basic plumbing

Basic electrical wiring

Who are my apprentices?

What kinds of people can you teach? Who needs what you're able to teach? Don't try to figure this out all at once - come back and add new thoughts as they come to you.

Young people - taxes, car maintenance, electrical, plumbing, etc.

Small business professionals - taxes, bookkeeping, investments

Microsoft technology professionals - PowerShell, SCCM, SQL Server

What are my milestones?

What medium- and long-term goals will help lead you to your success? Be specific: these should be objectively measurable, so that anyone could potentially look and see if you've done it or not.

- By the end of 2020, complete two fiction trilogies.
- By the end of 2020, have an audience marketing reach of at least 2,000.
- By the end of 2022, complete a third trilogy, along with two "fun" pieces not intended to generate revenue. By the end of 2022, have at least 20 Amazon review for each of my published books, and an audience marketing reach of at least 10,000.
- Complete leadership training course in 2020.
- By the end of 2021, move into a team lead role within my current company, or take a new position elsewhere.
- By the end of 2021, find a mentor who can help me improve my leadership skills.
- By the end of 2022, move into a mid-management role.
- By the end of 2024-2025, move into a senior leadership role. This year, look at job listings in the range I need, as well as just below, and see what I'm missing to hold down those jobs.
- By mid-2020, formulate an action plan to increase my skill set to the point where I could hold down a next-step job, preferably a team lead position in my current company.
- By mid-2020, develop a feeling for what kinds of positions or companies afford this. More tech companies are offering unlimited paid time off; investigate jobs in those companies as a primary target for future positions.

SAMPLE MONTH

Life Rules

- ☒ I've been my word.
- ☒ I've been detailed and precise.
- ☒ I've cut my losses when the time was right to do so.
- ☒ I've been friendly, even in the face of adversity.
- ☒ I've driven my life, not watched it happen.
- ☒ I've let Blue Sky Mode happen when it needed to.
- ☒ I've managed my personal time well.
- ☒ I've communicated well.
- ☒ I've observed the Yellow Line.

Needs Improvement

Got a lot angrier this month than I needed to. Need to learn to step away and let it burn off before I reflexively address something.

Did not focus on presentation skills at all this month, even though I had at least two opportunities to do so. This is bad because next month I've got a conference with 1,000 attendees and I don't feel confident or prepared.

Kept to ~30m per day of wasted time, but I need to cut that back next month - I have a lot going on. Need to push wasted time until after the day's work is done, maybe. Maybe try scheduling distraction time, but that might be too structured.

My Current Plan

Week 13, record myself doing at least one of my conference sessions, and listen back. Goal is to really cut out the "ums" and have a smoother delivery. Helps: become professional speaker, raise global profile.

Week 14, nail it at the conference. Make sure to not retreat to the speaker room after sessions. Eat lunch with attendees and network. Spend time networking in vendor expo as well. Goal is to land at least one white paper or webinar gig. Helps: become professional speaker, raise global profile; make most income from papers/webinars.

Plus, do all the to-dos I've already scheduled for these weeks.

Week 15, talk to Neil about pitching a book series to SAMS. Dust off the Delta Guide idea Chris and I discussed and share that with him for feedback. Helps: Bestselling books, professional writer.

Week 16, vacation. Make sure to take notebook so I can brainstorm series and book ideas without getting bogged into computer. Helps: become professional writer, bestselling books.

SAMPLE WEEK PLAN

Things to Achieve

- ☐ Record conference practice session and listen back
- ☐ Really review conference decks and get delivery figured out
- ☐ Make list of potential conference vendors to hit up
- ☐ Pack vests - trying out Chris' new look idea. Conference speaker shirts will be backup.
- ☐ Talk to J.R. about last week's blow up. Apologize and ask for some advice on handling that better if it happens again.

SAMPLE WEEK REVIEW

Be sure to highlight earned achievements on your Weekly Plan page for this week.

I worked on the following NEEDS IMPROVEMENT ITEMS:

Preso skills - much better workflow for preso prepping.

Ideas for adjusting my plan:

Had a great talk with Q. About helping them build out a community website. Leverages what I've been doing on ScriptingAnswers.com. Might be a new line of business in addition to papers and webinars.

Parts of my self-definition I didn't meet this week:

Worked too late most nights. Need to sit down with Chris and re-evaluate work conditions. Might need to ask him to drag me out for a drink so I step away and stop working at some point.

Things I taught, and to whom:

Helped Scott wrap his head around the bookkeeping thing. He's comfortable enough with QuickBooks now that he may ask Tom to I've him a bit of a raise in exchange for doing the books, instead of hiring a bookkeeper.

Excuses I made, and what they stopped me from doing:

Really put off making a vendor list for next week's conference. I'm totally not enthused by grip-n-grin in the expo hall, but I don't know of a better way to try and land new work. This is the third time I've felt like this, so I need to think about a plan adjustment to account for this, because it isn't going to go away, apparently.

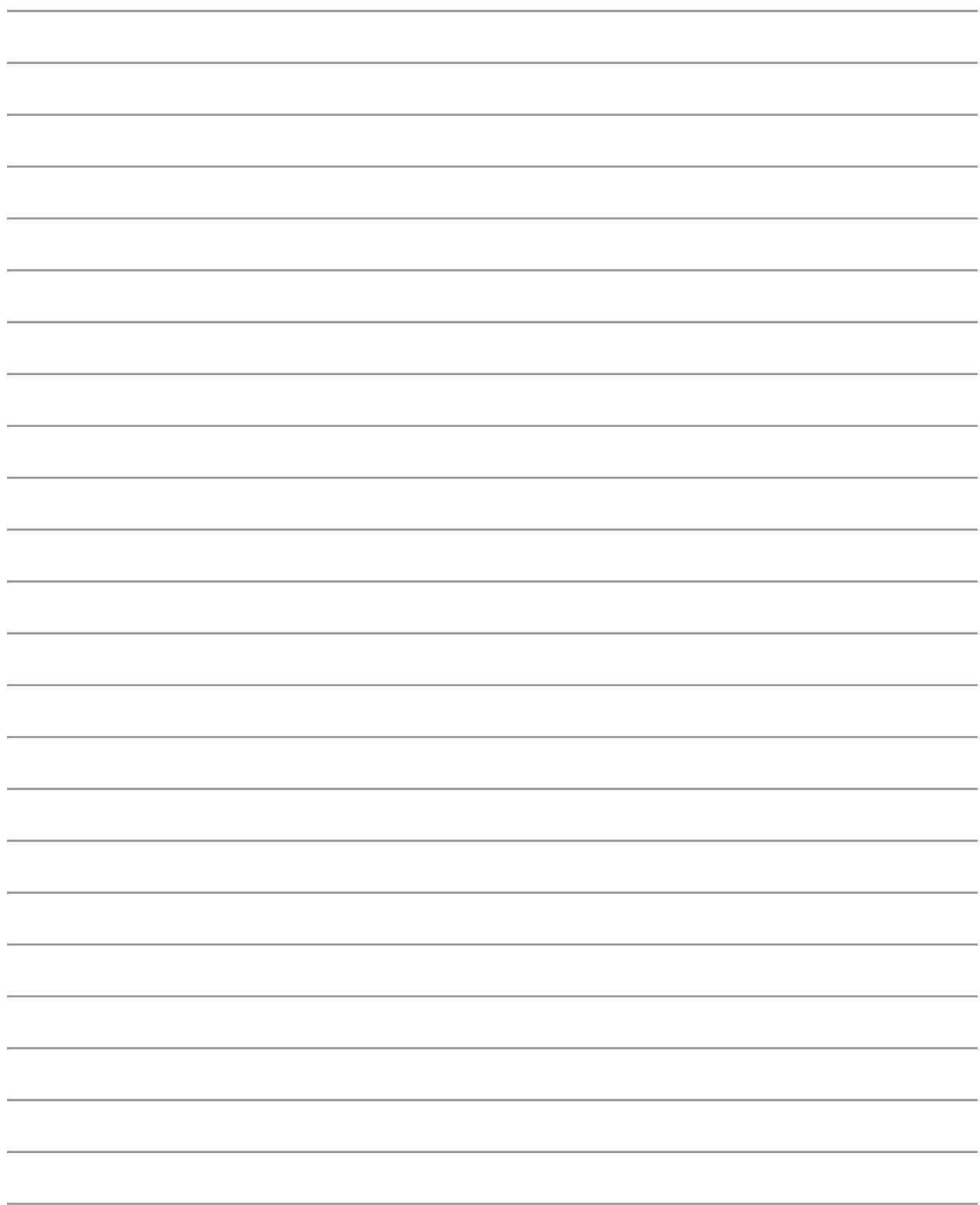
DEFINE THE GRIND

Be the Master walks you through these definition pages.

Who am I?

Define yourself. How do you want others to see you? How do you want to see yourself?

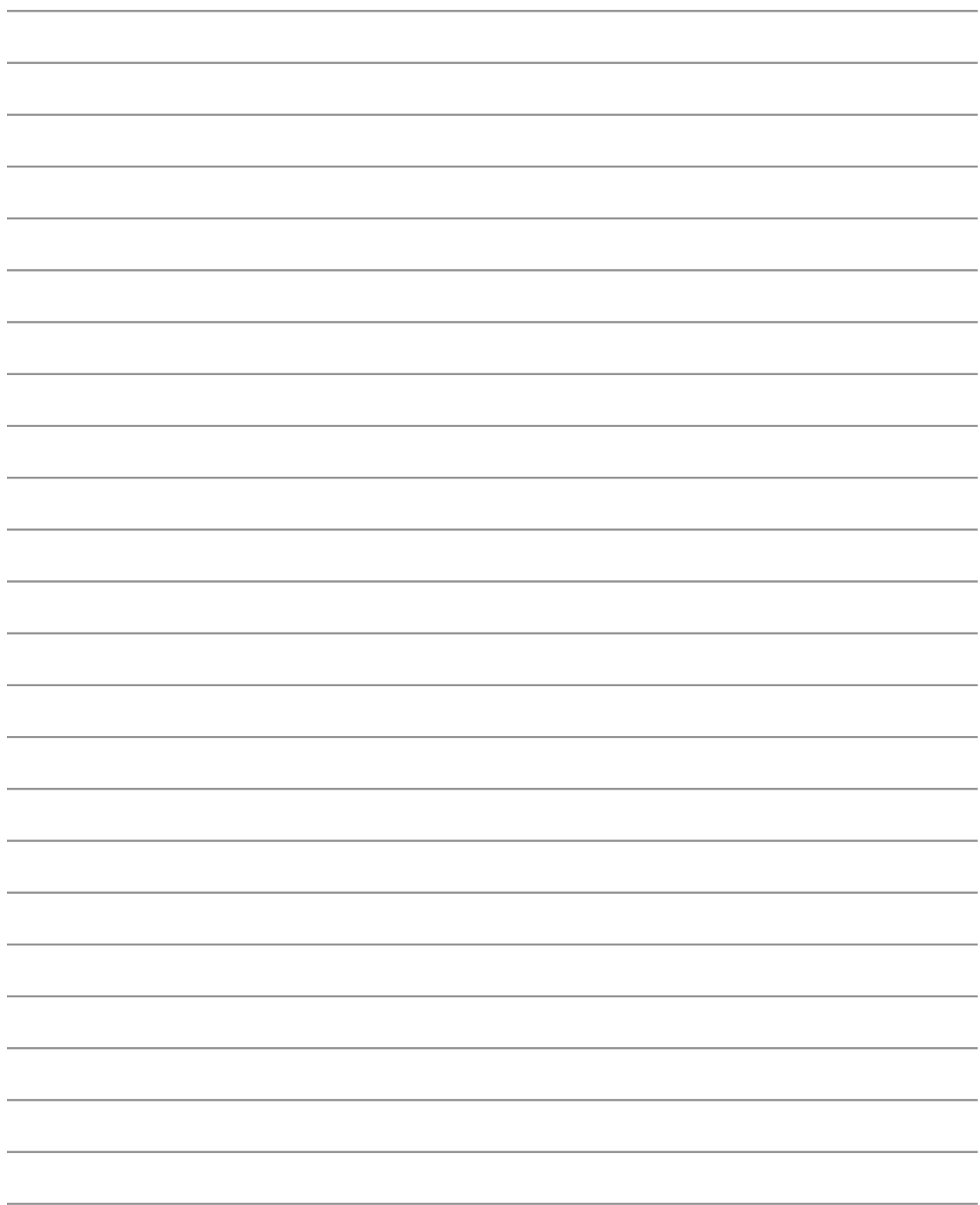
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What are my strengths and weaknesses?

What do you do incredibly well - almost without even trying? Would do *others* say you do well? Ask around. The answers may surprise you. Also document your weaknesses, and decide if you'll work on them, or leave them be.

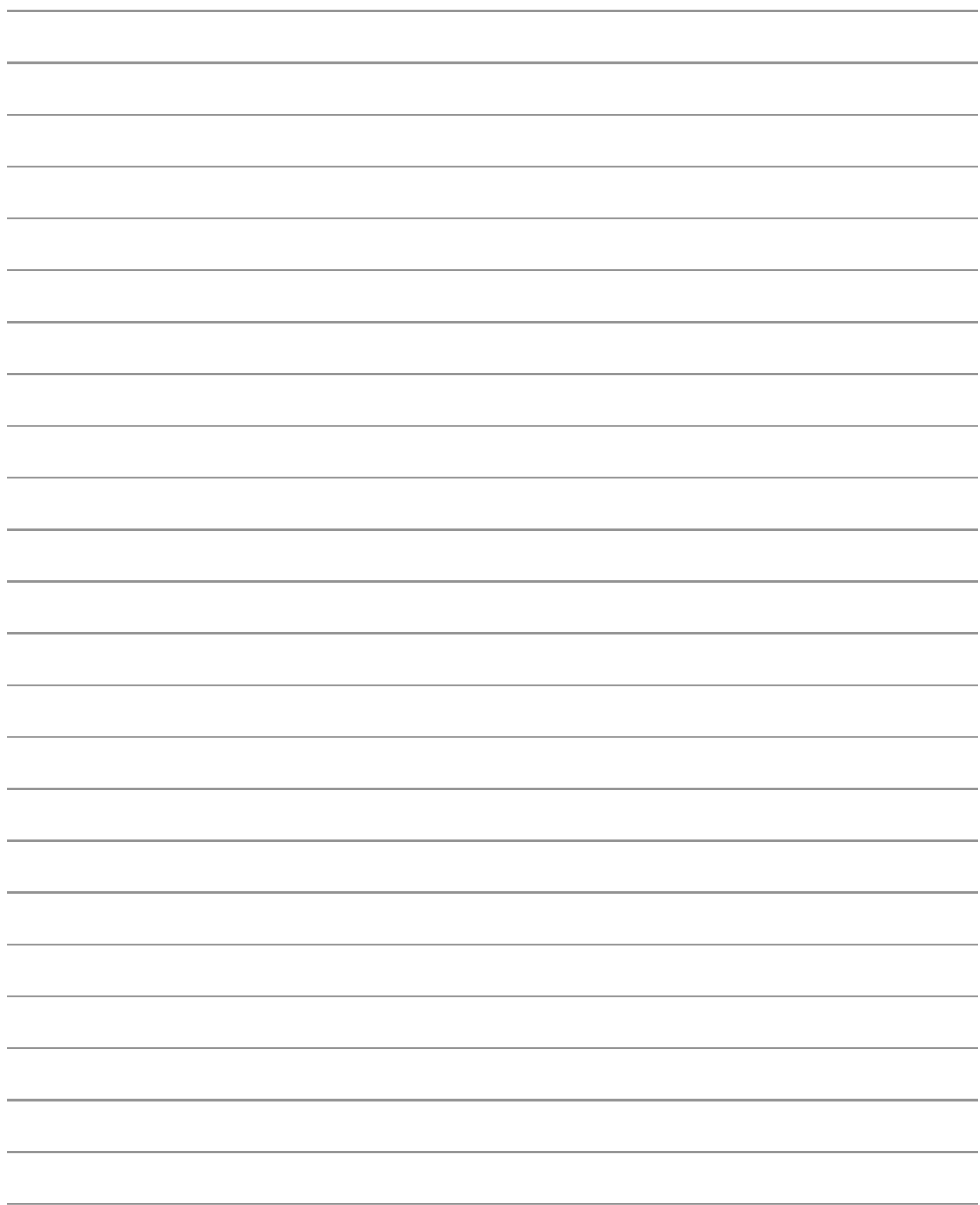
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What is my success?

Use this page to define what success looks like for you. Be specific, and only write down things that anyone could observe, measure, and determine if you've reached or not.

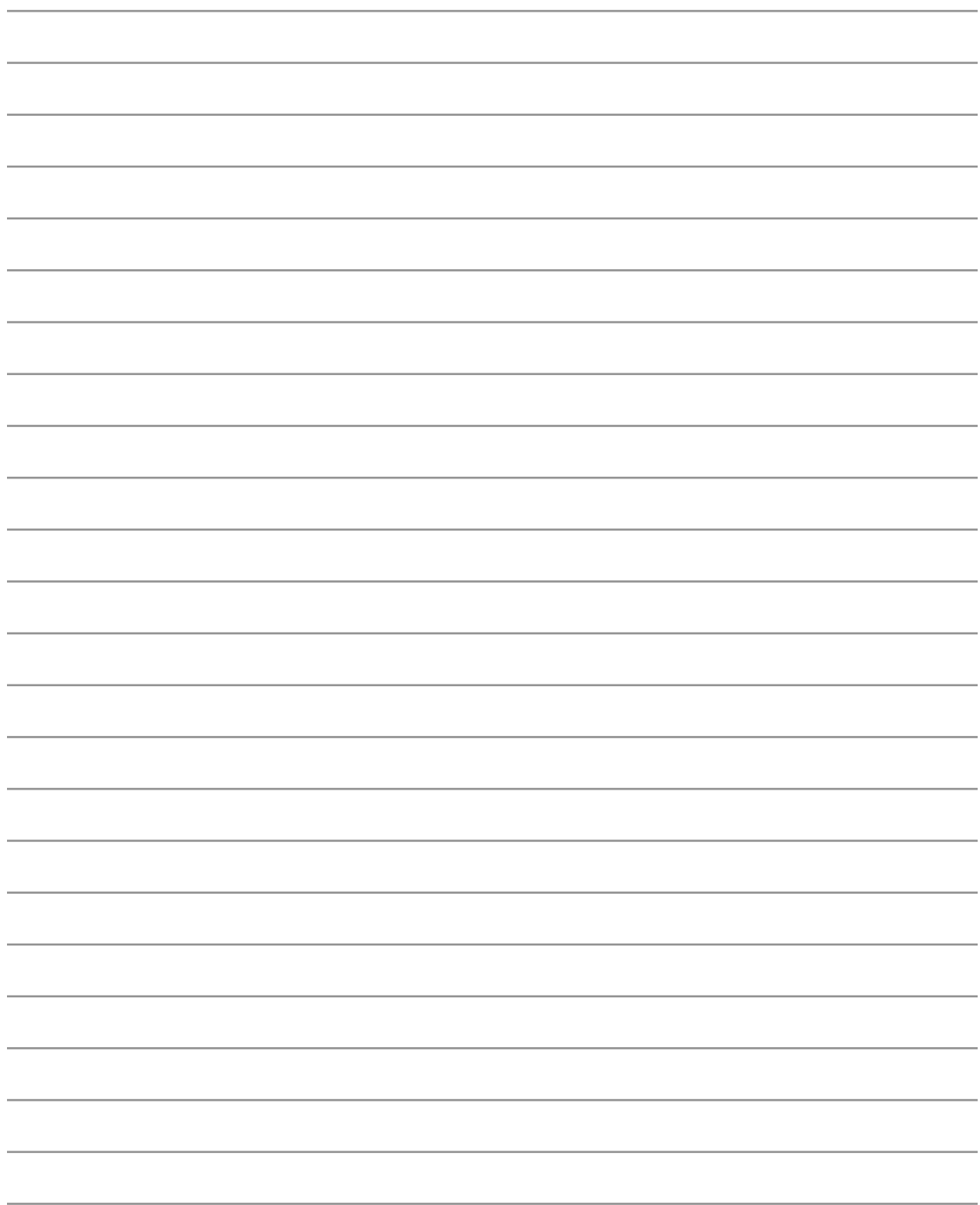
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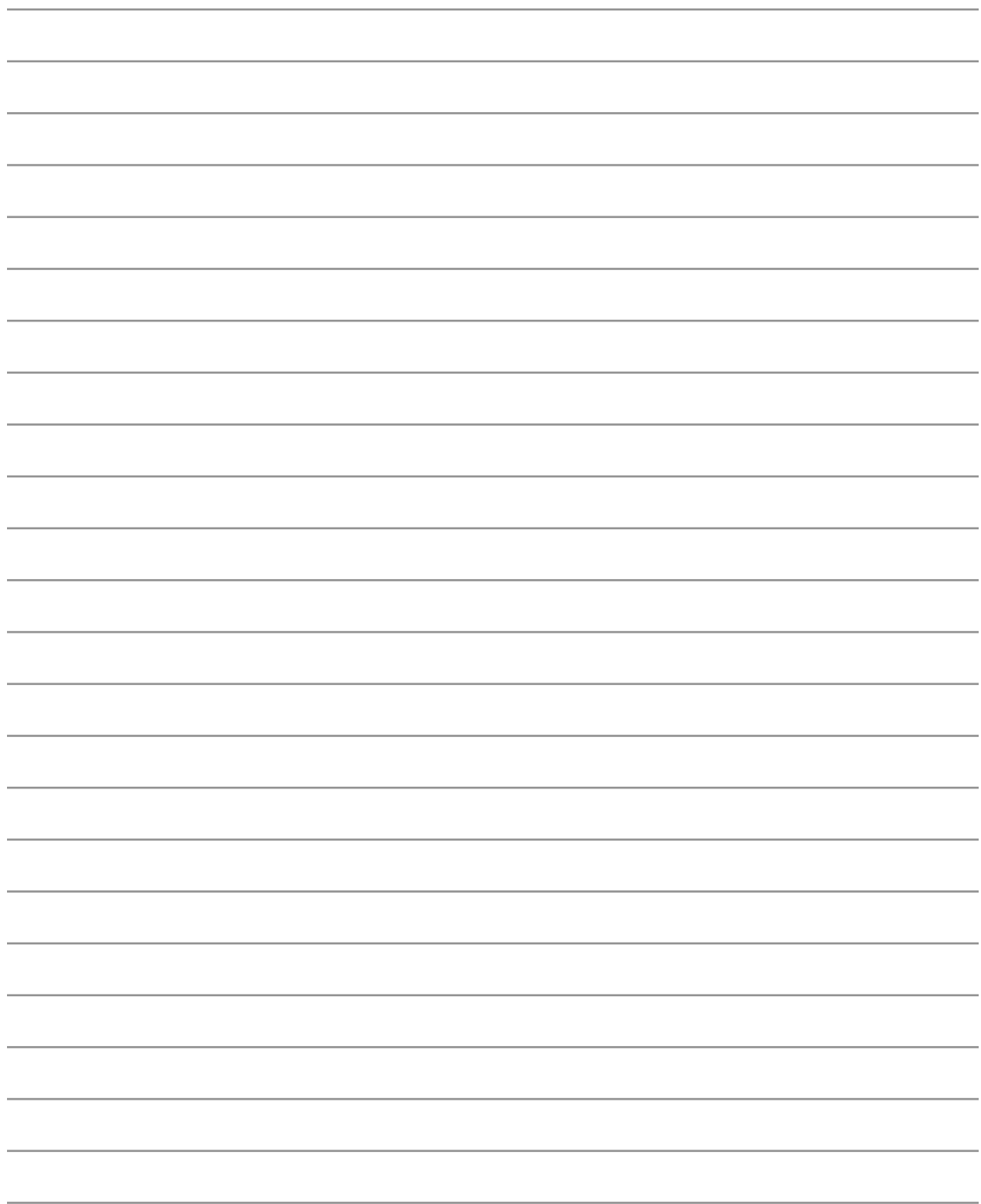
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Who are my apprentices?

What kinds of people can you teach? Who needs what you're able to teach? Don't try to figure this out all at once - come back and add new thoughts as they come to you.

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MONTHLY PLANS

Use these sections to plan and review each month. Do this on the last day of the month - don't be lazy, and don't make exceptions. This is a time to be honest with yourself, and it won't take long.

Simply document three things:

1. Which Life Rules did you live by, or not live by, this month? We'll provide you with a simple checklist. Refer to *Be the Master: Second Edition* for the Life Rules. For your first month using The Grind, skip this step - but review the Life Rules, so you'll know what's ahead.
2. What's your current Success Plan? If you haven't made a change since the prior month, just write that, but this is a time to review your plan, decide what's working (based on your weekly notes), and make adjustments to keep yourself on track.
3. Where do I need to improve? This could be Life Rules you need to be better at, Strengths you need to use more often, or just areas about yourself that you, personally, want to work on.

WEEKLY PLANS

These are a chance to set up the week ahead. All you need to do is spell out the things you want to achieve.

Each achievement needs to be specific and measurable. Anyone should be able to look at your life and *objectively* state whether you met the achievement or not. Don't put anything vague or subjective. And, keep in mind, it's only a week. You're not going to accomplish everything. Be reasonable.

This isn't a to-do list. You can write some to-do type stuff, if you want, but this is about the things that will help you Be the Master, not just getting the right groceries. This is about working toward your plan. Maybe you'll only plan to get one thing done that really contributes to The Plan... that's fine.

Maybe you'll have one Needs Improvement item that you know will be relevant in the coming week - write that, to remind yourself to work on it. Maybe it's a Life Rule you've not been following that you want to concentrate on. Whatever.

Then, *keep your weekly plan open, in front of you, every day*. Read it every morning and every evening. Remind yourself to aim for those achievements.

WEEKLY REVIEWS

At the end of each week, take a minute to reflect upon the previous week.

Achievements

Go back and highlight the achievements that you legitimately earned, and ask yourself what kept the other ones from happening. Will you carry those over to next week's plan? Were you aiming too high?

Improvements

Next, where did you improve? Did you address any of your "Needs Improvement" items enough that you can scratch it off the list at the front of the workbook? Remember, *all of life* is about continually improving; the Needs Improvement list is about the *seriously deficient* stuff, so if you've got a handle on one of them, cross it off.

Adjustments

How's the plan going? Do you need to make any adjustments? Make some notes - you can consider them at the end of the month.

Living

Are you living your definition of yourself? Make a list of things, from the list at the front of this workbook, that you *didn't* live by. Those are things to consider working on as an achievement for next week's plan.

Teaching

What did you teach, and to whom? Make a list - and congratulate yourself a little. Take a moment to update your list of things you can teach at the front of this workbook, and to note any new ideas you have for who your apprentices might be.

Excuses

Where did you sabotage yourself? Excuses aren't always bad - maybe you just had a *really* hard week and needed some downtime. That's fine. Just *make a note* of these things, because if they keep happening, you either need to (a) adjust your plan to accommodate your capabilities or (b) stop making excuses. Sometimes an excuse means you've just aimed too high - recognize that, and adjust. Sometimes it means you're cheating yourself, and you need to stop.

JANUARY

Life Rules

- ☐ I've been my word.
- ☐ I've been detailed and precise.
- ☐ I've cut my losses when the time was right to do so.
- ☐ I've been friendly, even in the face of adversity.
- ☐ I've driven my life, not watched it happen.
- ☐ I've let Blue Sky Mode happen when it needed to.
- ☐ I've managed my personal time well.
- ☐ I've communicated well.
- ☐ I've observed the Yellow Line.

Needs Improvement from Last Month

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

[illegible]

WEEK OF _____ — REVIEW FOR PRIOR WEEK

Be sure to highlight earned achievements on your Weekly Plan page for this week.

I worked on the following NEEDS IMPROVEMENT ITEMS:

Ideas for adjusting my plan:

Parts of my self-definition I didn't meet this week:

Things I taught, and to whom:

Excuses I made, and what they stopped me from doing:

PLAN FOR WEEK OF _____

Things to Achieve

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Things to Achieve

[illegible]

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PLAN FOR WEEK OF _____

Things to Achieve

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FEBRUARY

Life Rules

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- ☐ I've cut my losses when the time was right to do so.
- ☐ I've been friendly, even in the face of adversity.
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Needs Improvement

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MARCH

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[illegible]

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Excuses I made, and what they stopped me from doing:

PLAN FOR WEEK OF _____

Things to Achieve

[illegible]

JUNE

Life Rules

- ☐ I've been my word.
- ☐ I've been detailed and precise.
- ☐ I've cut my losses when the time was right to do so.
- ☐ I've been friendly, even in the face of adversity.
- ☐ I've driven my life, not watched it happen.
- ☐ I've let Blue Sky Mode happen when it needed to.
- ☐ I've managed my personal time well.
- ☐ I've communicated well.
- ☐ I've observed the Yellow Line.

Needs Improvement

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Things to Achieve

[illegible]

AUGUST

Life Rules

- ☐ I've been my word.
- ☐ I've been detailed and precise.
- ☐ I've cut my losses when the time was right to do so.
- ☐ I've been friendly, even in the face of adversity.
- ☐ I've driven my life, not watched it happen.
- ☐ I've let Blue Sky Mode happen when it needed to.
- ☐ I've managed my personal time well.
- ☐ I've communicated well.
- ☐ I've observed the Yellow Line.

Needs Improvement

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SEPTEMBER

Life Rules

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- ☐ I've driven my life, not watched it happen.
- ☐ I've let Blue Sky Mode happen when it needed to.
- ☐ I've managed my personal time well.
- ☐ I've communicated well.
- ☐ I've observed the Yellow Line.

Needs Improvement

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OCTOBER

Life Rules

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Things to Achieve

[illegible]

NOVEMBER

Life Rules

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- ☐ I've been detailed and precise.
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- ☐ I've been friendly, even in the face of adversity.
- ☐ I've driven my life, not watched it happen.
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- ☐ I've managed my personal time well.
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DECEMBER

Life Rules

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- ☐ I've been friendly, even in the face of adversity.
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