



The Flow Cycle (Struggle and Release)

Key Takeaways

- 1 The Flow Cycle
- 2 Struggle
- 3 The Downside of a Working Memory
- 4 Graceful Struggling: Two Levels of Grit
- 5 Hacking the Grind
- 6 Hacking the Mind
- 7 Anxiety and Excitement are the Exact Same Signals!
- 8 The More Fear the Fewer Choices
- 9 S*%! to Do When S*%! Goes Wrong
- 10 Release

Quote:

“ Most unhappiness is caused by people listening to themselves... Instead of talking to themselves. ”

— *William James*

Exercise

1. Struggle, Persistence and Release Triggers

2. Macgyver Method

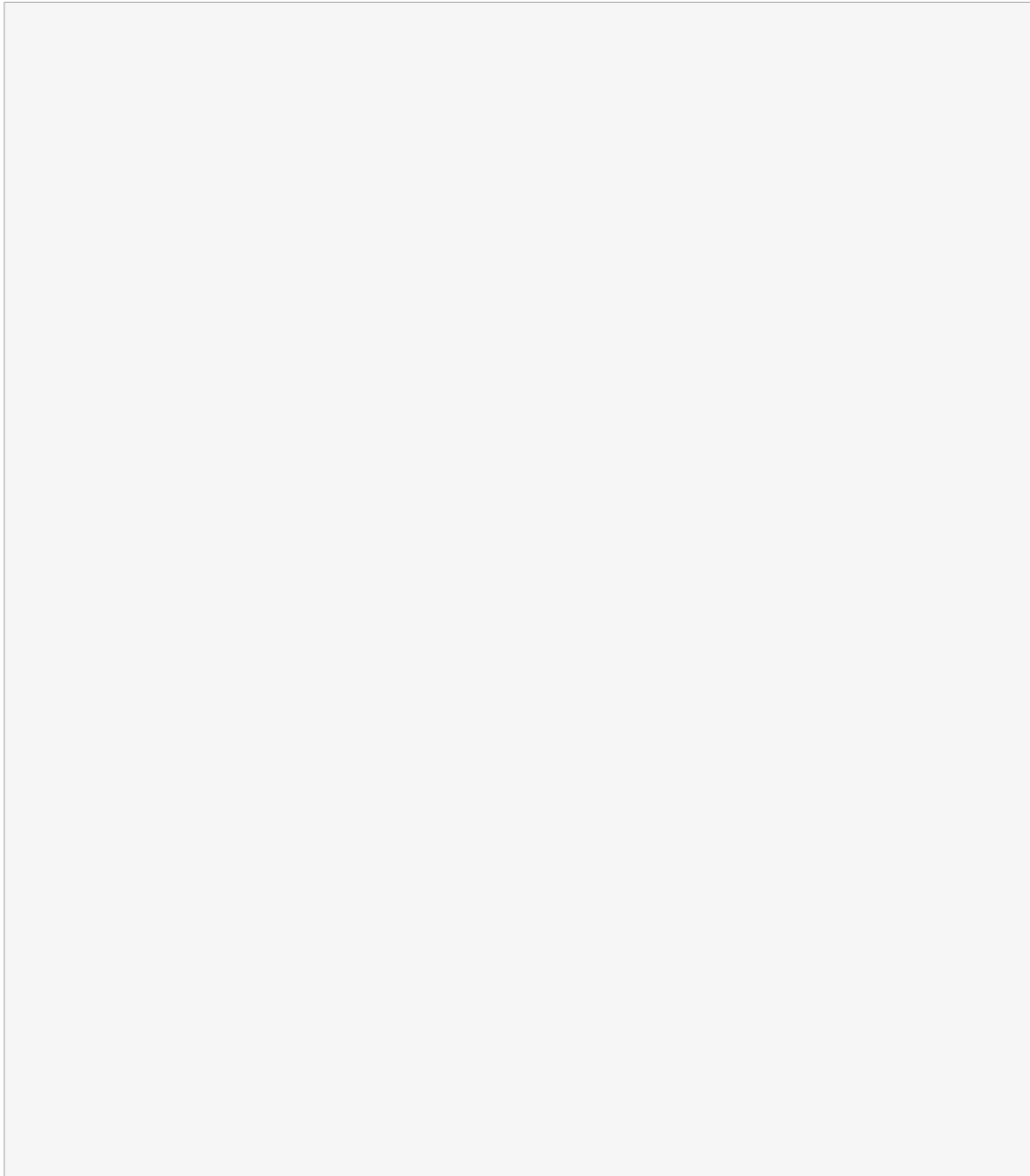
3. Retro-Casting Your S*** List

See next page for details

Exercise

Struggle and Persistence

- 1 Be willing to struggle long enough to release
- 2 Avoid self-distraction



Exercise

Exercise: Release Triggers

Experiment with one or more of the following
to find your optimal release triggers:



Release walk for exercise induced transient hypofrontality



10 minute parasympathetic box breathing:

- inhale 4 seconds
- hold 4 seconds
- exhale 6 seconds
- hold 4 seconds
- repeat



Slow gentle stretching

Bonus Exercise

MacGyver Method

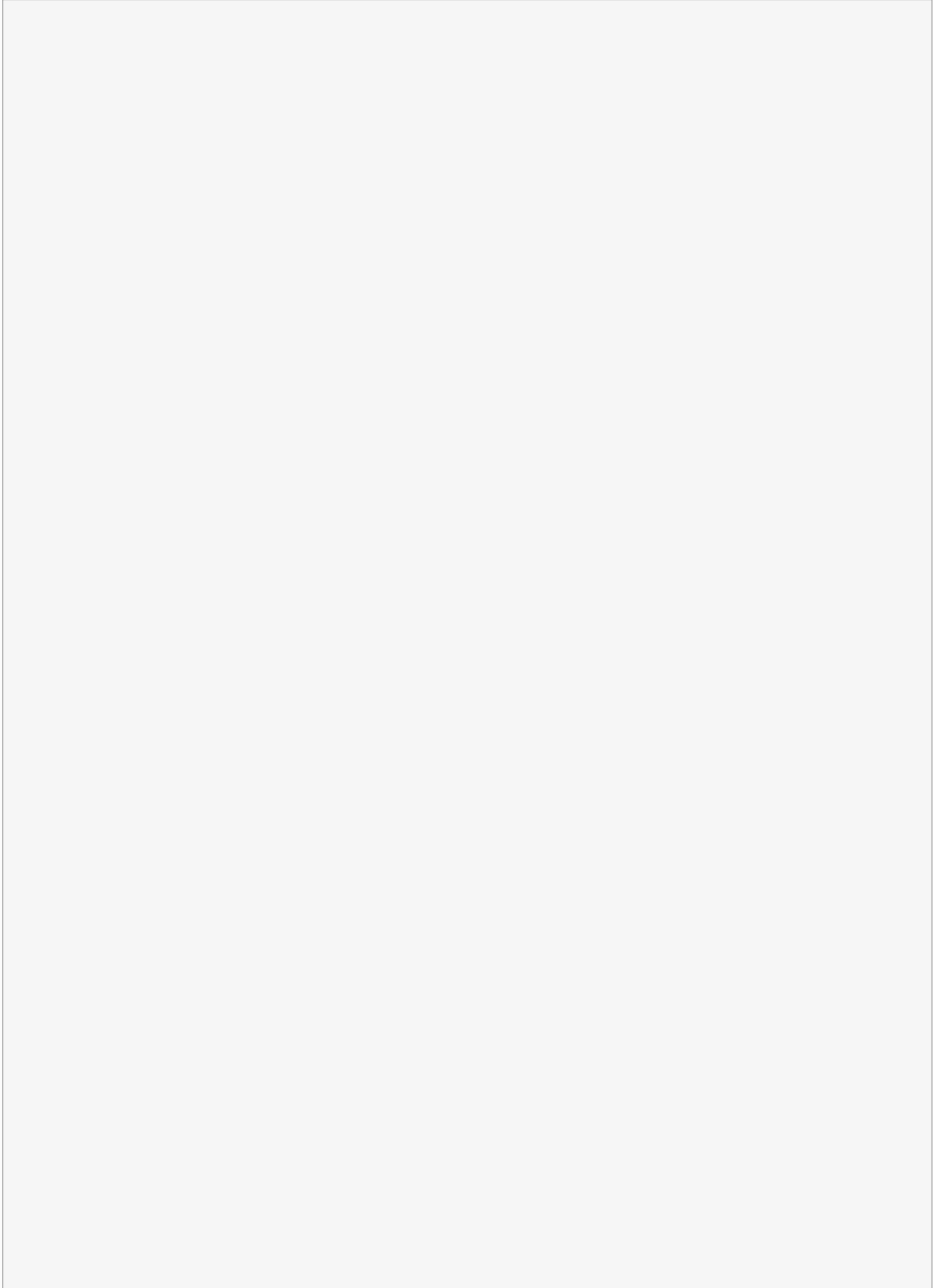
To hack the pattern recognition system, take five minutes after a 90-minute deep work session. Handwrite a question about a problem. Be as specific as possible.

Then, take your mind off the problem. Do something in the release category (e.g., low-grade physical activity). Note the release activity below.

Go to sleep for the night. Wake up and begin writing: "The answer to my question is..." Keep writing for 3-5 minutes, even if writing "I have no idea what to write." Look for your answer in the writing.

Bonus Exercise

MacGyver Method



Bonus Exercise

Retro-Casting Your S*** List

1 My last three big projects were...

2 What three things do I know now that I didn't know then?

3 Why did I make errors?

4 What's my pithy reminder of the right decision?

5 Rinse and repeat!

Glossary

Peak Exit: A peak exit is when you intentionally leave a flow state on a high note. This makes you associate a positive feeling with the flow experience.

Cortisol Surges: Think of [cortisol](#) as nature's built-in alarm system. It's your body's main stress [hormone](#). It works with certain parts of your [brain](#) to control your mood, motivation, and fear. Your [adrenal glands](#) -- triangle-shaped organs at the top of your [kidneys](#) -- make cortisol.

Norepinephrine Spikes: Norepinephrine (NE), also called noradrenaline (NA) or noradrenalin, is an organic chemical in the catecholamine family that functions in the brain and body as a hormone and neurotransmitter. The general function of norepinephrine is to mobilize the brain and body for action. Norepinephrine release is lowest during sleep, rises during wakefulness, and reaches much higher levels during situations of stress or danger, in the so-called fight-or-flight response. In the brain, norepinephrine increases arousal and alertness, promotes vigilance, enhances formation and retrieval of memory, and focuses attention; it also increases restlessness and anxiety. In the rest of the body, norepinephrine increases heart rate and blood pressure, triggers the release of glucose from energy stores, increases blood flow to skeletal muscle, reduces blood flow to the gastrointestinal system, and inhibits voiding of the bladder and gastrointestinal motility.

Deep Embodiment: This consists of being deeply connected to your five senses, as well as proprioception (how you experience yourself in space), kinesthesia (your sense of movement in space), and vestibular awareness (your sense of balance and spatial orientation). It refers to learning through doing.

MacGyver: The MacGyver method is a process you can follow to help you work the struggle phase.

Notes

Lesson Resources

1. The Breakout Principle: How to Activate the Natural Trigger That Maximizes Creativity, Athletic Performance, Productivity and Personal Well-Being,
By Herbert Benson
2. Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience,
By Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
3. The Art of Learning,
By Josh Waitzkin
4. ["Get Excited: Reappraising Pre-Performance Anxiety as Excitement."](#),
Brooks, A.W., 2013
5. Mindset: The New Psychology of Success,
By Carol Dweck
6. The Macguyver Secret,
By Lee Zlotoff
7. The Embodied Mind : Cognitive Science and Human Experience,
By Francisco Varela, et al.
8. Intelligence in the Flesh: Why Your Mind Needs Your Body Much More Than it Thinks,
By Guy Claxton
9. [Cognit activation: a mechanism enabling temporal integration in working memory](#),
Fuster, J.M., Bressler, S.L., 2012