

# life's work

ruminations on the inelegant art of failing forwards

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# Chapter 1

## preamble

What if one practices mathematical science like music?

My goal is to spend four hours a day on work with intent.

For a sanity, efficiency, and inspiration, I intend to balance my time between three categories:

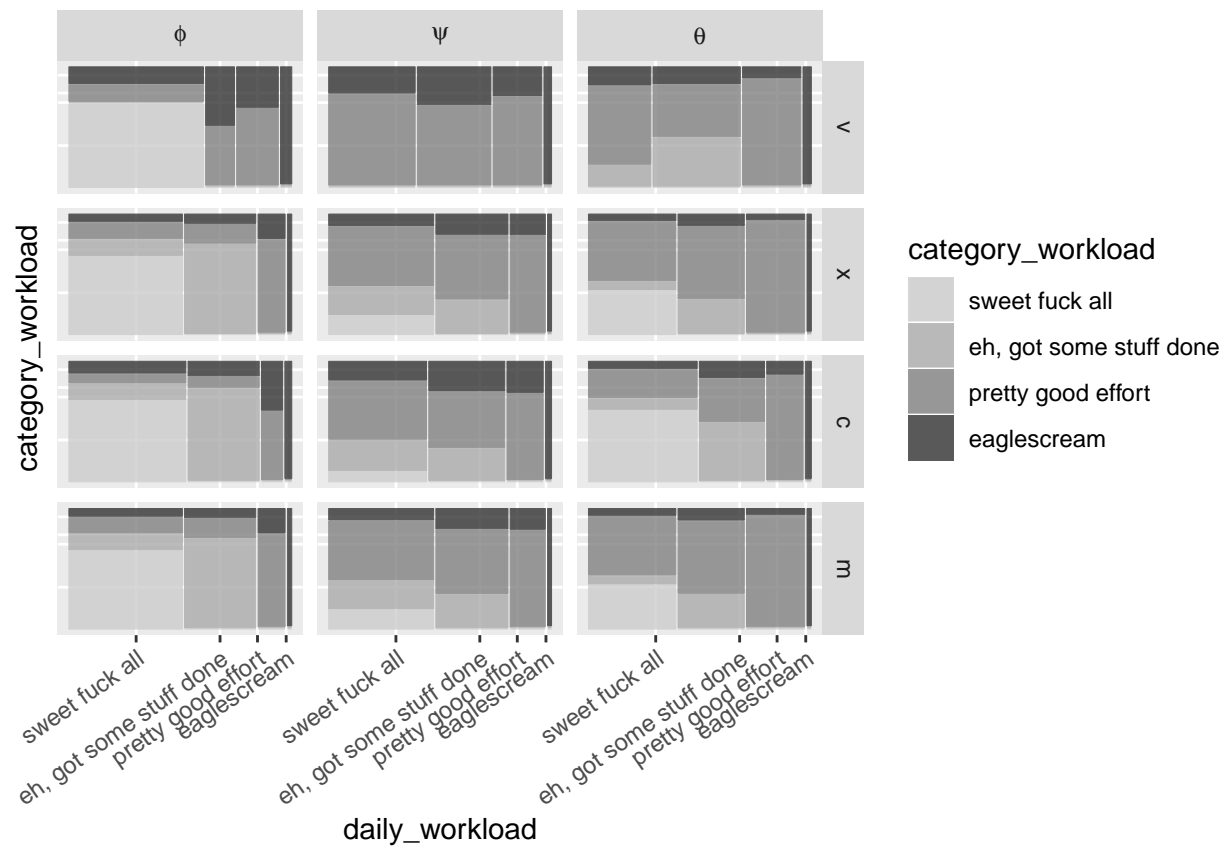
- research,  $\varphi$ ;
- skills,  $\theta$ ;
  
- busywork,  $\psi$ ; and
- wellness,  $\pi$



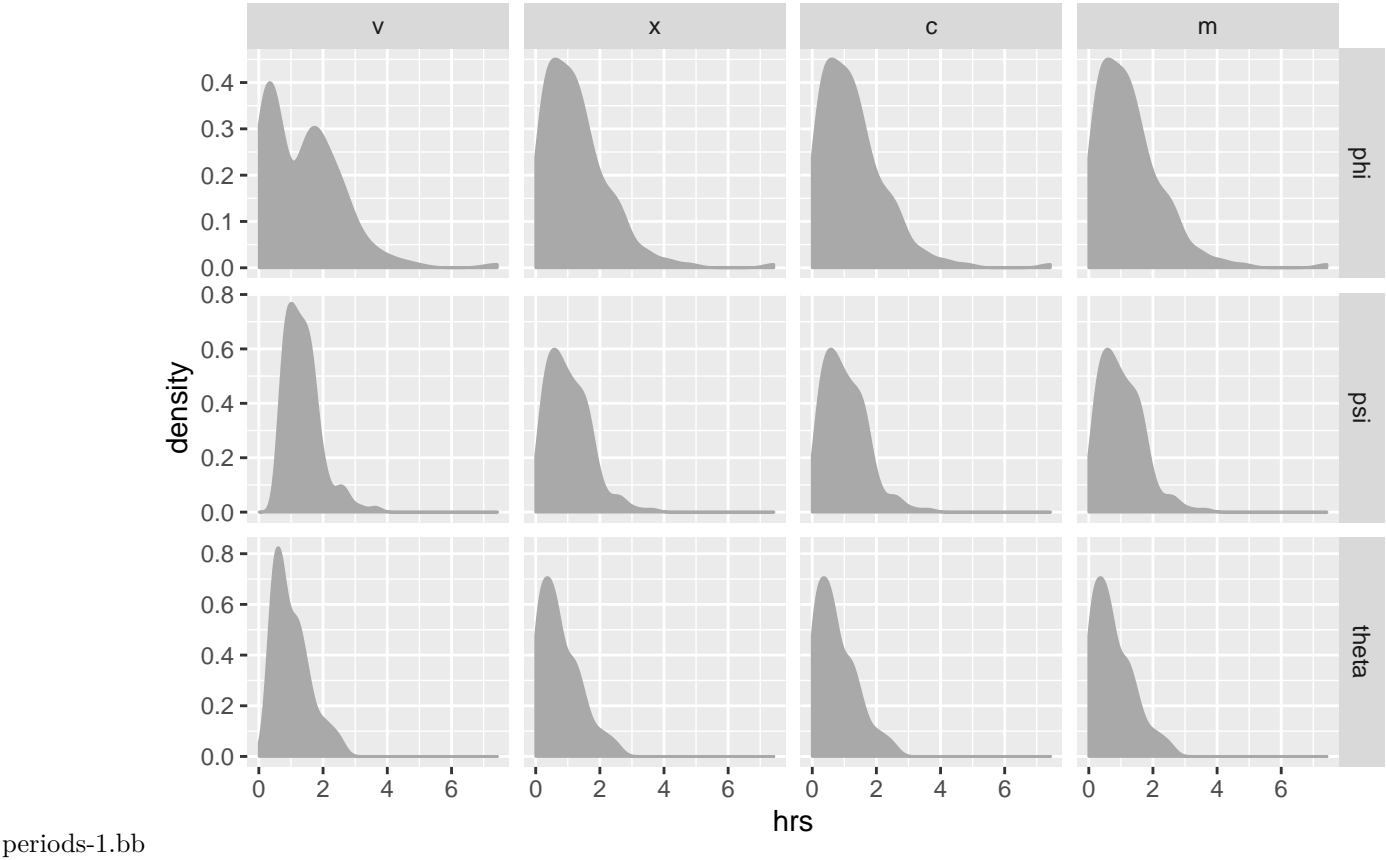
## Chapter 2

## analysis

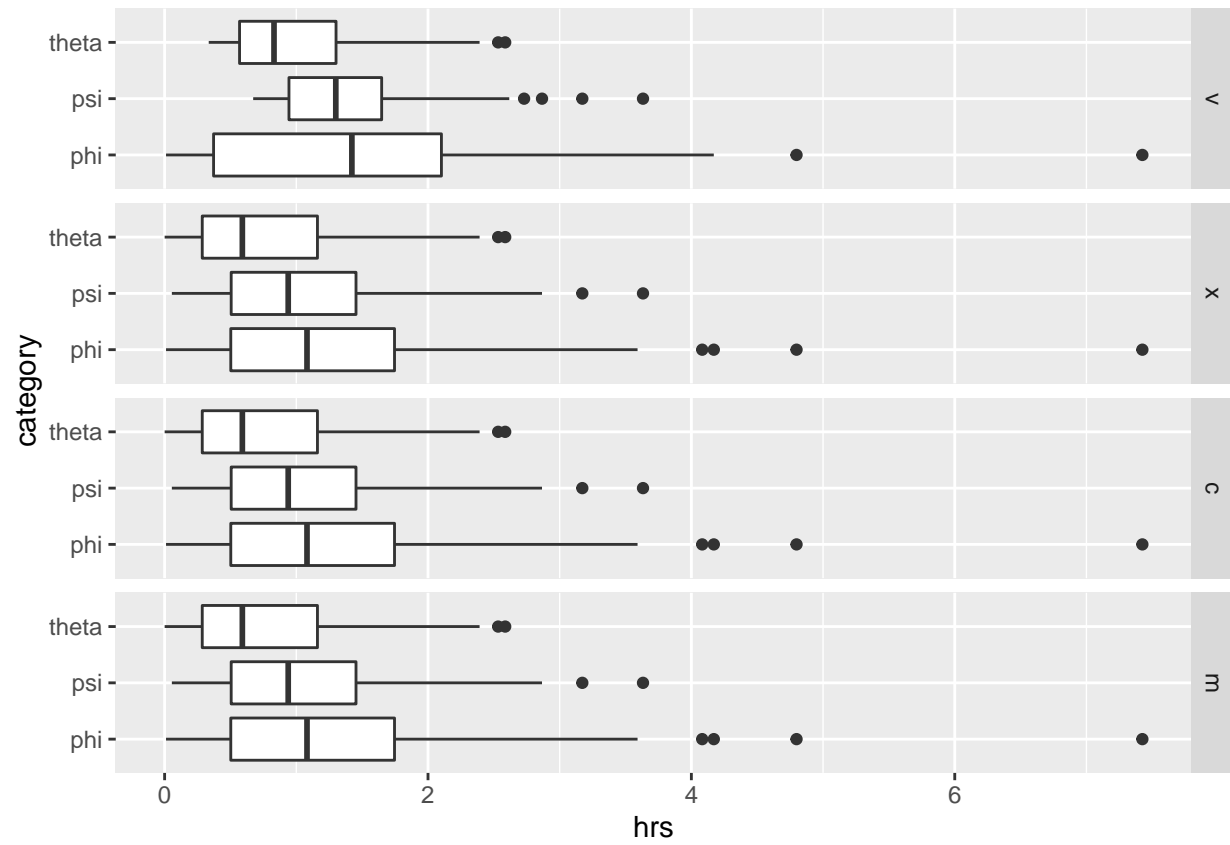
### 2.1 workload intensity goals achieved



2.2 distribution of hrs spent per day per category







categories-1.bb



## Chapter 3

# rituals

### 3.1 instantiate

Start each day by drawing up a day view.

Begin the daily log, and add priority (\*) daily tasks.

### 3.2 day view

tracker	position	description
goals	top left	pom goals
poms	next to goals	track poms achieved
projects	top right	one project/category
order of events	below goals	live with intent
task cycles	below projects	$\varphi, \theta, \psi, \bar{o}$

### 3.3 daily tasks

priority	context	category	task	description
\$*\$	\$\forall\$	\$\psi\$	what is on fire?	What must be advanced today or very bad things will happen
\$*\$	\$\natural\$	\$\psi\$	calendar	check day, week, month; note events of the day; upcoming deadlines
\$*\$	\$\natural\$	\$\psi\$	inboxes	email, 3c2, handbag, unpack suitcase
\$*\$	\$\sharp\$	\$\psi\$	pill	take medication
\$\sim\$	\$\forall\$	\$\psi\$	monthly log	check list for anything that is on fire
\$\sim\$	\$\forall\$	\$\psi\$	thread	NA
\$\sim\$	\$\natural\$	\$\psi\$	needs action	finish pom
\$\sim\$	\$\natural\$	\$\psi\$	ynab	finish pom
\$\varnothing\$	\$\natural\$	\$\pi\$	write to dani	check in with dani on slack
\$\varnothing\$	\$\natural\$	\$\psi\$	waiting	waiting emails
\$\varnothing\$	\$\natural\$	\$\theta\$	export measures	download report into files, then email to myself, then download
\$\varnothing\$	\$\sharp\$	\$\pi\$	wash brushes	wash brushes
\$\varnothing\$	\$\sharp\$	\$\pi\$	kitchen	clean kitchen
\$\varnothing\$	\$\sharp\$	\$\pi\$	laundry	put away one basket of laundry
\$\varnothing\$	\$\sharp\$	\$\pi\$	floors	vacuum
\$\varnothing\$	\$\sharp\$	\$\pi\$	water plants	NA

#### 3.3.1 $\pi$

priority	context	category	task	description	bump
\$\varnothing\$	\$\natural\$	\$\pi\$	write to dani	check in with dani on slack	NA
\$\varnothing\$	\$\sharp\$	\$\pi\$	wash brushes	wash brushes	NA
\$\varnothing\$	\$\sharp\$	\$\pi\$	kitchen	clean kitchen	NA
\$\varnothing\$	\$\sharp\$	\$\pi\$	laundry	put away one basket of laundry	NA
\$\varnothing\$	\$\sharp\$	\$\pi\$	floors	vacuum	NA
\$\varnothing\$	\$\sharp\$	\$\pi\$	water plants	NA	NA

### 3.4 review

#### 3.4.1 daily log

This is the hard part.

Pare down to one active project per category and process daily log onto one page:

- if this project will take more than a day: migrate to monthly log, a collection tagged in the monthly log, or to GitHub issues
- add signifiers
- log projects in day view tracker
- add projects from monthly log if all  $*$  and  $\sim$  have been completed

#### 3.4.2 day view

- count poms
- log goals
- assign task cycles

- exclude  $\emptyset$  categories with no  $*$  and  $\sim$  projects where current goal has already been met in poms by category
- always finish with scheduling review  $\bar{o}$
- consider including a sparkjoy project
- +2 events to order of events

### 3.4.3 minibreak peeps

- social media & slack

## 3.5 task cycle

shorthand	description
$\forall *$	complete all priority ( $*$ ) tasks
$\sim \geq 1$	complete at least one anxiety ( $\sim$ ) task
$\emptyset \geq 0$	complete any or none of the untagged tasks
$\cdot \geq 1$	write down as many next actions as I can think of
$\bar{o}$	review

## 3.6 monthly log

List of projects that will take longer than a day.

## 3.7 pom goals

pom := 20 minutes

workload	phi	theta	psi	exercise
light	2	1	1	1
moderate	4	2	2	2
hardcore	6	4	4	3

## 3.8 order of events

Day begins with review  $\bar{o}$ .

### 3.8.1 workday

Alternate events:

- $\not{n} + 2$  poms
- $\pi$

Around other events such as meetings.

### 3.8.2 wake up

- wake up
- [read]
- wash & dress
- [yoga]
- day view
- [yoga]

### 3.8.3 evening

- bathtime + reading
- bed

## 3.9 signifiers

todo: create a signifiers sheet

signifier	meaning	position
$\$ \backslash \text{eighthnote} \$$	today	4
$\$ * \$$	priority	5
$\$ \text{i, ii, } \backslash \text{dots} \$$	project	4
$\$ \backslash \text{sim} \$$	anxiety	5
$\$ \backslash \text{cdot} \$$	task	1
$\$ \backslash \text{varphi} \$$	research	2
$\$ \backslash \text{theta} \$$	skills	2
$\$ \backslash \text{psi} \$$	busywork	2
$\$ \text{NA} \$$	project	3
$\$ \text{NA} \$$	look into	3
$\$ \backslash \text{natural} \$$	on computer	2
$\$ \text{o} \$$	event	1
$\$ \backslash \text{overline o} \$$	review	1
$\$ \text{NA} \$$	more than a day	2

## Chapter 4

# ruminations

### 4.1 daily projects

If a project is logged in the daily-log then I am committing to finishing it today.

### 4.2 pomodoros

20 minutes seems to be the amount of time I can reasonably expect myself to focus unbroken.

### 4.3 lowtech

Keep what can be kept on paper, on paper. Keeps screens busy and helps me focus.

### 4.4 work with intent

This term is adopted from a piano teacher that I studied under, that I subsequently adapted into my own teaching. She encouraged me to *practice with intent*; that is, play what you intend to play. I found this to be particularly useful for discouraging my students, and myself, from the age-old pitfall of playing a piece of music until you make a mistake and stopping and playing that section over until you get it right. It's better to play *through* the piece, which empowers you to adapt to mistakes you will inevitably play and, most importantly, not lose time. Oddly, it appeared to be a universal misconception, myself included, that without careful consideration, the attempt to *get the notes right* inevitably means the **rhythm is wrong**, and thus you get nothing right after all. Best, therefore, to play through the piece. I use my bullet journal to help me focus on work with intent; I've found the simplicity of only timing work when I've written down what I intend to do has been extraordinarily powerful in helping me complete daunting tasks.

### 4.5 ~ beethoven piano sonata

todo: <https://twitter.com/cantabile/status/1112145903203180544>