

K.I.S.S. – Keep It Simple and Slow-Down

More information doesn't mean you're better prepared to take a decision.

Sometimes “simplicity” is easier said than done. Most of us have been trained to believe that the more information we have, the better decisions we can make. This is true to a point, but what most of us struggle from these days is not a lack of information, but a total information overload. We see SO much information in front of us, and much of it seems to be contradictory. AVOID UNNECESSARY COMPLEXITY.

When we can remember this for both our own processes/goals/activities as well as any products/projects/services we put out into the world, it can help to declutter our minds of the messiness brought on by too much information.

One tool to help with overwhelm in starting a new project or goal is something I call the “Primary Puzzle Piece.” We're often working with too many puzzle pieces at once, and it can be difficult to see how they fit together.

Here is the process:

1. List out all the factors that you are dealing with that play into your decision making.
2. Choose ONE that is most critical or meaningful to you, and that you want to focus on first. Imagine that this puzzle piece lies at the heart of the puzzle. No matter what, the other pieces need to fit to this one.
3. Select the SECOND most critical or meaningful piece and see how it can fit to the first. (Hint: sometimes this needs a bit of creative problem solving, but I find that there is almost always a way.)
4. Check in. Do you need more puzzle pieces to start moving. Is this enough? Most people – as well as from my own experience – find that they only need the one or two first pieces to start moving. You don't need to have it all figured out to start, which is where the next section picks up.
5. If you need one more piece to decide, select the THIRD most critical or meaningful piece and repeat.

What is your Next Actionable Item? (Break it down)

A PROJECT and a TASK are not the same thing. Sometimes we may put a “task” on our To-Do list such as:

“Organize retirement party for George.” Or “Add new product to client offerings.”

These are projects, not tasks. Each of these items requires multiple actions to be completed. It's understandable, therefore, that sometimes our To-Do lists feel overwhelming and put us into either frenzy or freeze-mode.

Learn to break down projects into their most basic steps. Working backwards from “what does DONE look like?” can be super helpful. Then put your attention and focus on the very first actionable item...the single next task that will move you one step closer to your goal.

“Actionable Tasks = A task that you can actually take action on or complete without breaking it down into any further sub-tasks” ~GTD

Release the “big picture” project view for the moment and focus all your attention in this single next step, and notice the lightness that comes from knowing you're on your way.

For more on Next Actions...

explore this [video](#) on breaking down projects into tasks.

Activity ≠ Action

Slowing down often feels counterintuitive when we feel ourselves under pressure. Our minds yell:

“Move faster! There’s no time to waste!”

But from this state of mind, we rarely are in the best condition for good decision-making. We’re driven by the fear of losing time instead being driven forward by an open and creative mind. Fear shuts down our pre-frontal cortex (our creative problem-solver brain) and defaults to our amygdala (our ancient monkey-brain whose primary function is to keep us safe).

This is often where activity kicks in, we just start moving to avoid the pain/agitation/frustration. And even if it’s not with intention, we feel like at least we are doing something. In reality, this activity is not moving you closer to your goal. It is robbing you of valuable energy and resources that could be intentionally directed towards furthering your vision.

If you’re curious to learn more about the Amygdala Hijack...

explore this [video](#) to understand the fight, flight or freeze reaction of our mind works, and how we can put our brains back to work for us.

Here is where creating a bit of space and distance to our current task can be helpful.

- Take a few slow, deep breaths.
- Go for a short walk.
- Sit for a moment and find a nice view.
- Listen to the birds outside or the rain falling on the roof.

Give yourself permission to step back to create an activity-reset and refocus on the next action that is truly needed. From this space of increased calm, stress is reduced and decision making is improved.



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