

make life easier

# hacks

8 hacks to reduce stress of everyday life

version 3.0



# FREE

**PMEZ**

*we tamed project management for you* <sup>TM</sup>



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## how to use the hacks

- use one or more hacks whenever you feel stuck, overwhelmed or unsure where to start
- each hack tackles a real-life problem—whether it's making a decision, setting boundaries or figuring out what to do next

## why they work

- **built for real life-** no special skills required
- **proven-** literally millions of business professionals have used these strategies and we have tamed them for regular people

## how do we know

- since 2020 PMEZ has shared these hacks in classes and workshops with people from all walks of life
- our students consistently say they are intuitive, easy to use and instantly helpful



# 8 hacks



## decisions

**use your values to guide decisions**

*how do you decide which path to take?*



## relationships

**navigate relationships based on influence and energy**

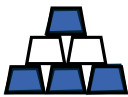
*what who needs more attention - or less?*



## boundaries

**know both: what's in and out**

*does this really need to be done?*



## complexity

**divide to conquer**

*how can I make a big thing doable?*



## resources

**know the resources needed to make it happen**

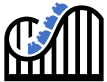
*do you have what you need when you need it?*



## priorities

**spend time where it matters most**

*what's most important to focus on now?*



## worries

**reframe worries as risks**

*how can I deal with my worries?*



## progress

**take a pulse-check**

*am I being realistic about whether I am on track or not?*



# DECISIONS



**use your values to guide decisions**  
*how do I decide which path to take?*

## when to use

- deciding whether to take on a new commitment or responsibility
- having to make a tough choice
- wanting to explain why you made or will make a certain decision

## how to use

- state the decision and its options
- identify the **values** important to you
- check for other **influences** working against your values
- go with your values, if you can

### values

#### **freedom & independence**

*the power to make your own choices and live life on your terms*

#### **connection & belonging**

*strong relationships, community and feeling part of something bigger*

#### **growth & learning**

*self-improvement, new skills and expanding your mind*

#### **security & stability**

*a steady, predictable life, feeling safe and at ease*

#### **creativity & expression**

*new ideas, self-expression and unique ways of doing things*

#### **service & helping others**

*a positive difference in the world or in someone's life*

#### **joy & fun**

*happiness, excitement and moments that bring laughter or pleasure*

### influences

#### **ego & pride**

*the pressure to prove something or avoid looking weak*

#### **obligation & guilt**

*the demand of others' expectations (or your own)*

#### **fear & insecurity**

*worry about failure, judgment, or the unknown*

#### **peer/social pressure**

*the need to along with the crowd or please others*



## RELATIONSHIPS



**navigate relationships based on influence and energy**  
*who needs more attention or less*

### when to use

- prioritizing your time across relationships in your life
- figuring out whose support is really needed
- dealing with conflicting opinions

### how to use

- list the people involved in a situation
    - who has a say
    - who needs a say
    - who is trying to have a say
  - decide each person's **influence** on the situation
  - understand their **energy**
  - plan your focus
    - **active** with key players and persuaders
    - **targeted** with helpers
    - **limited** with onlookers
- PLUS** **guarded** with negative people

#### influence

##### key player

*directly involved; their input affects the outcome*

##### helper

*can assist; provide resources or make things easier*

##### persuader

*not in charge, but their opinion carries weight*

##### onlooker

*has opinions but no real effect on what happens*

#### energy

##### positive

*supports your efforts, finds solutions*

##### neutral

*does not help much but does not get in the way*

##### skeptical

*needs convincing but could be useful*

##### negative

*complains, resists or causes stress*



# BOUNDARIES



**know both: what's in and out**  
*does this really need to be done?*

## when to use

- feeling overwhelmed by too many tasks or demands
- controlling how much time or energy to devote to something
- explaining why you have to say no or not take on something

## how to use

- list all of the demands or expectations for a situation
  - what you promised
  - what people expect
  - what you expect
- identify what is **essential** to include
- for the others, choose whether to
  - **skip** - it's nice to have but not worth the effort
  - **delegate** - someone else can take it on
  - **delay** - it can happen another time

### essential

#### **health, safety, legality**

*things that must be done to keep people safe, follow laws, or meet basic responsibilities*

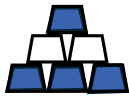
**basic operation, use, enjoyment** *the minimum needed to make something work or be worthwhile*

#### **promises made**

*commitments you have explicitly agreed to and are responsible for following through on*



# COMPLEXITY



## divide to conquer

*how can I make a big thing doable?*

### when to use

- feeling paralyzed by the size of a task or goal
- struggling to figure out where to start
- wanting to make progress but feeling stuck

### how to use

- write down the big task or goal that is stressing you
- visualize what it looks like when it's *done*
- now visualize the **building blocks** to get to *done*
- split any building blocks into smaller blocks
- tackle one building block at a time instead of focusing on the whole job



# RESOURCES



**know the resources needed to make it happen**

*do you have what you need when you need*

## when to use

- starting on a big task or goal which will need funds or resources
- noticing delays because people or supplies are missing
- wanting to avoid last-minute scrambling

## how to use

- visualize the work to complete the big task or goal
- observe what you will need... your **resources**
- check that you have the resources on hand
- if not, plan tasks to get them or find substitutes

## resources

### **budget & funding**

- money
- budget plan
- payment tools

### **locations**

- community centers
- libraries
- schools and universities
- co-working spaces
- event venues
- parks and outdoor spaces
- makerspaces / fab labs

### **people**

- volunteers and helpers
- contractors
- vendors or suppliers
- collaborators or partners

### **materials, equipment, supplies**

- office supplies
- food and beverages
- craft and DIY materials
- furniture and decorations
- computers, software, and design tools
- video and audio gear
- hand and power tools





## PRIORITIES



### spend time where it matters most

*what's the most important to focus on now vs later?*

### when to use

- worrying there is not enough time to get something big done
- feeling overwhelmed by the work needed to get something big done
- feeling unsure how to focus your energy to get something big done

### how to use

- list all of the **tasks** needed to do get something big done
  - include things big and small
  - consult to-do lists
  - include tasks for any building blocks from Hack #4 (divide to conquer)
- circle the tasks that takes the most time, effort and resources
- put a check mark next to any tasks that must be finished before the circled tasks can start
- focus your efforts on the circled and checked tasks
- do the other work along the way

### example tasks

#### planning & setup

- decide who is doing what
- schedule meetings or check-ins

#### communicating

- write communication material
- make calls and requests

#### getting resources (see resources hack)

order or gather supplies  
 reserve space or equipment  
 pick up, borrow, or prep materials  
 research costs or funding options

#### making & setting-up

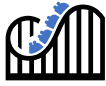
draft, design, or build  
 practice, rehearse, or test  
 gather input and revise

#### delivering & providing

submit, launch, start something  
 host or meet  
 clean up or wrap up  
 send updates or confirmations



# WORRIES



## reframe worries as risks

*how can I face my worries?*

### when to use

- feeling anxious about something that might happen
- avoiding something because of fear or uncertainty
- wondering how to move forward in the face of mounting concerns

### how to use

- state your worry which is
  - possible future problems
  - something you can't fully control
- for each worry (now a risk),
  - ask how likely is it to happen? (base it on facts, if possible)
  - visualize what you see and feel if the risk comes to pass,
  - ask: "in the big picture, how bad is it if it comes true?"
- if the likelihood of the risk is high and the picture looks bad, act by
  - finding ways to reduce the likelihood of the risk
  - thinking how you will adjust if the risk comes true



## PROGRESS



### take a pulse-check

*am I being realistic about whether I am on track or not*

### when to use

- doubting whether you will finish something you started
- feeling discouraged because something is taking longer than expected
- needing to explain why you are not done yet

### how to use

- step back and look at what you have already completed
- picture what is still left to do
- ask yourself **honestly**: looking at what's been done and what's left to do, can you realistically complete things when required?
- if not, adjust
  - when you'll get done
  - how you will get things done
  - what you'll get done





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