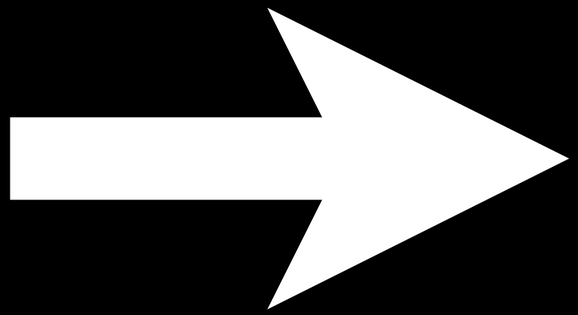
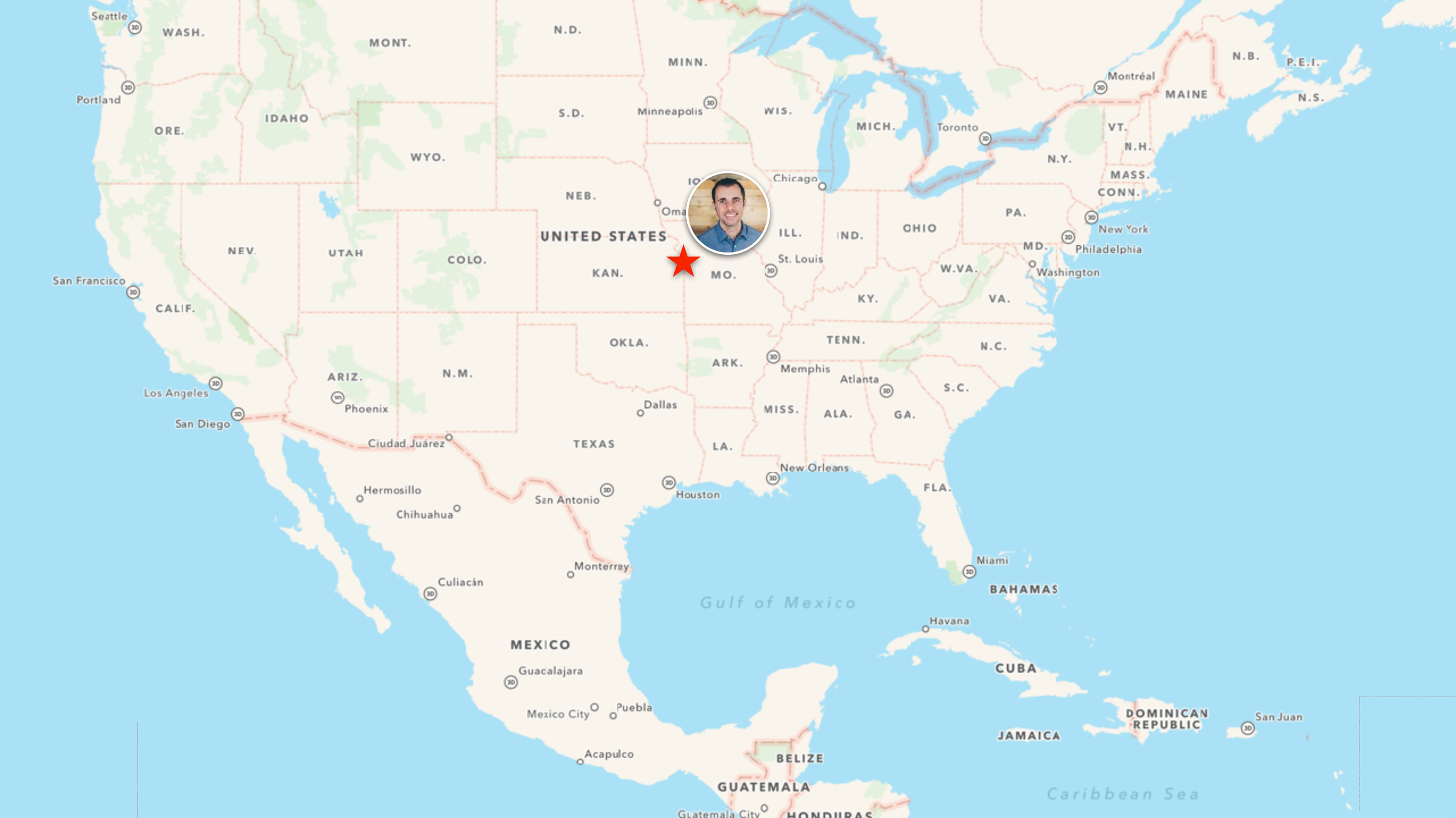
Focus & Writing

Shawn Blanc
@shawnblanc

THE SWEET SETUP

- Say Hello in the chat
- Ask questions
- Highlight cool points
- Isaac Smith is helping




Seattle
WASH.
MONT.
N.D.
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N.B.
P.E.I.
Montréal
Portland
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Chicago
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Washington
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San Diego
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TEXAS
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New Orleans
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Hermosillo
San Antonio
Houston
Chihuahua
Miami
Monterrey
BAHAMAS
Culiacán
Gulf of Mexico
Havana
MEXICO
CUBA
Guacalajara
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
San Juan
Mexico City
Puebla
JAMAICA
Acapulco
BELIZE
GUATEMALA
Caribbean Sea
Guatemala City
HONDURAS

About Shawn Blanc

- 3 Boys (Noah, Giovanni, Benson)
- The Sweet Setup
- Tools & Toys
- **The Focus Course** *helps you find focus and get control of your time and attention.*
- Been working from home, for myself full-time since 2011.

740 Registered

575 Votes

Writing Workflows

190 votes

Deep Work & Staying Focused

170 votes

TOPICS

Common Areas of Resistance

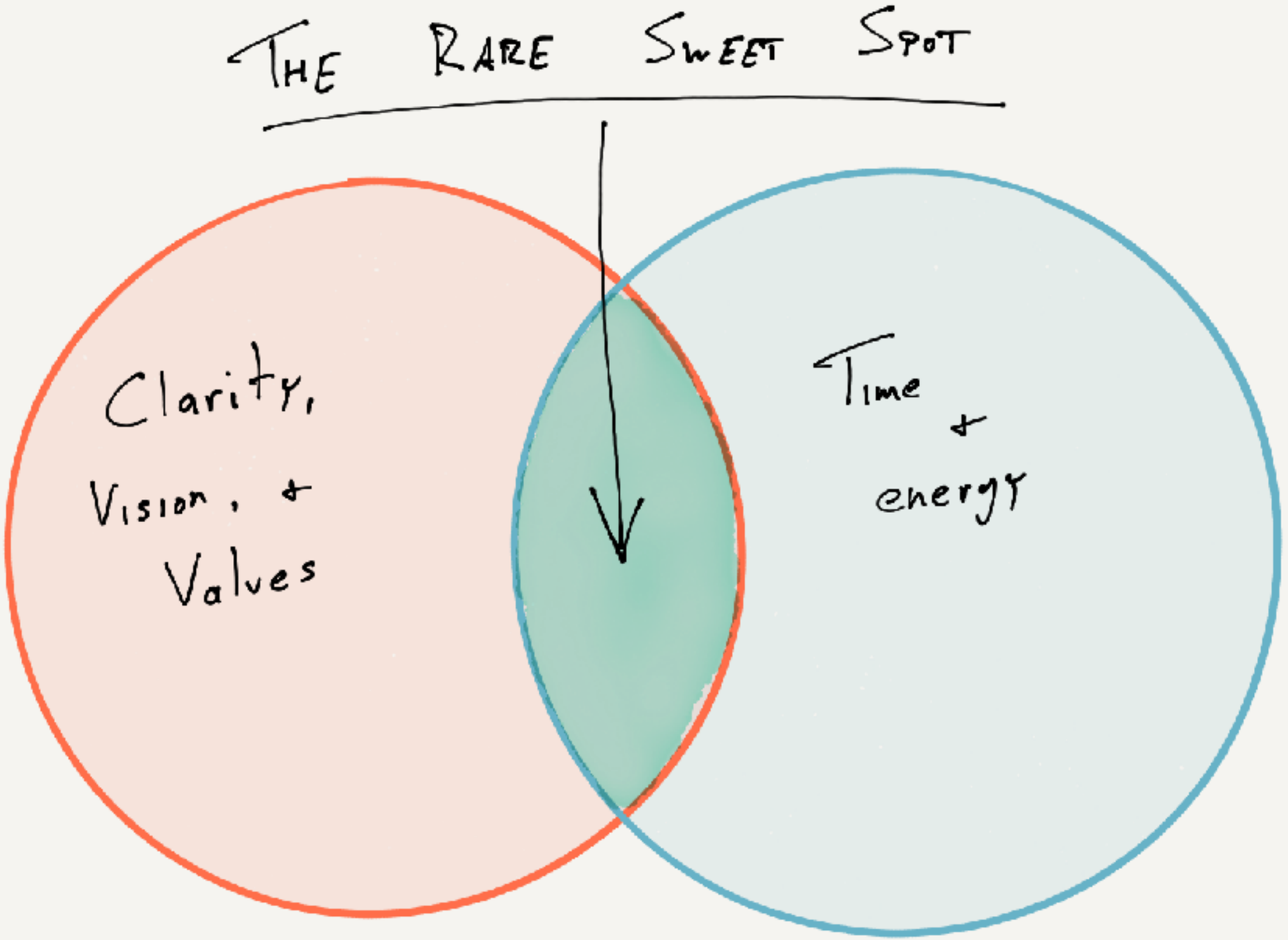
Writing Tools

Writing Routine & Workflow

Systems (for Deep Work & Focus)

Questions & Answers

Giveaway!


THE RARE SWEET SPOT
Clarity,
Vision, &
Values
Time
&
energy

RESISTANCE

Fear of the blank page

Fear of what others think

Lack of skills relative to your “taste” as a creator

No time

Habitual procrastinator

Too exhausted

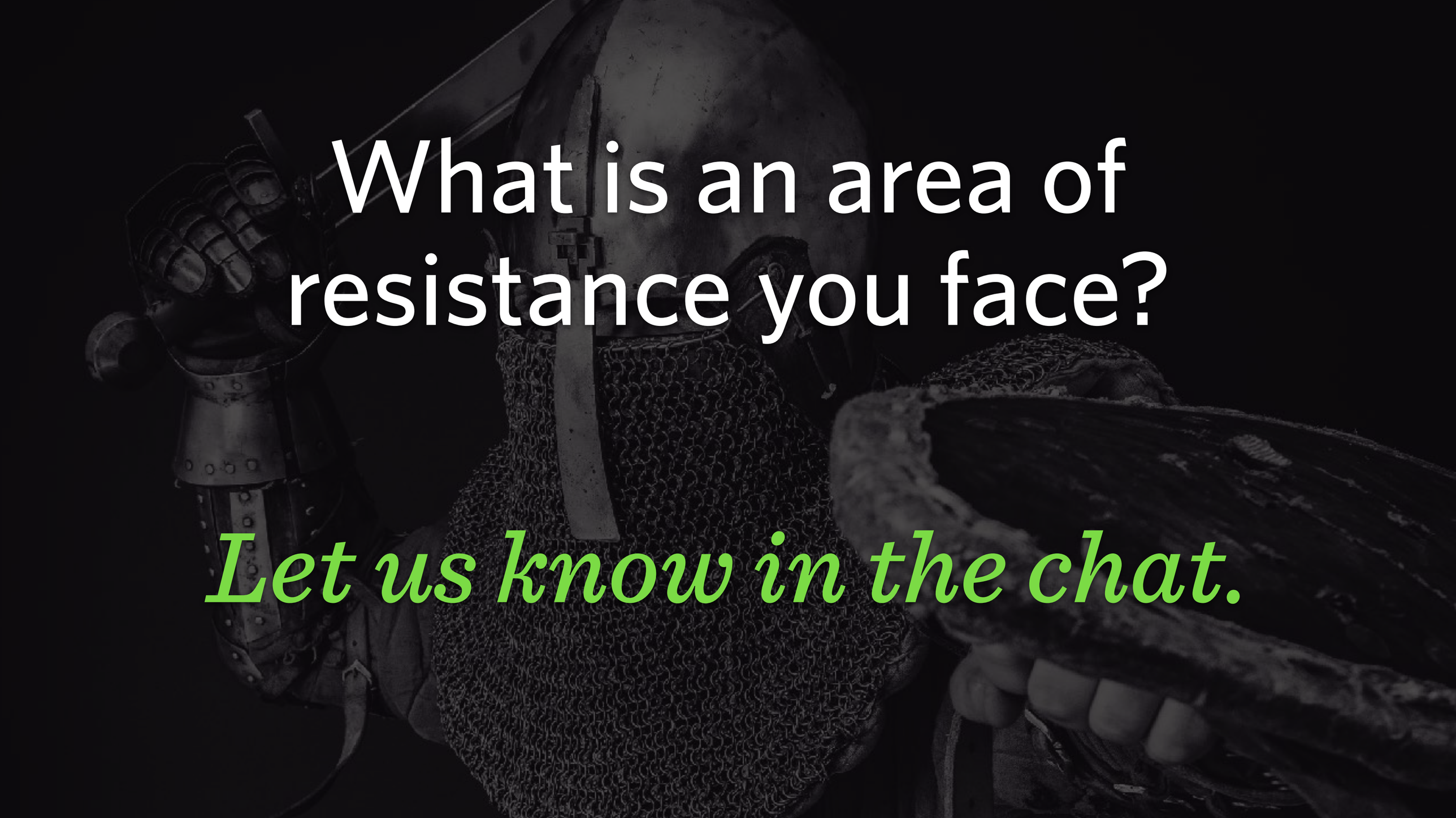
Don’t know what to work on or write about

Interruptions

Inability to focus

Don’t have the right tools

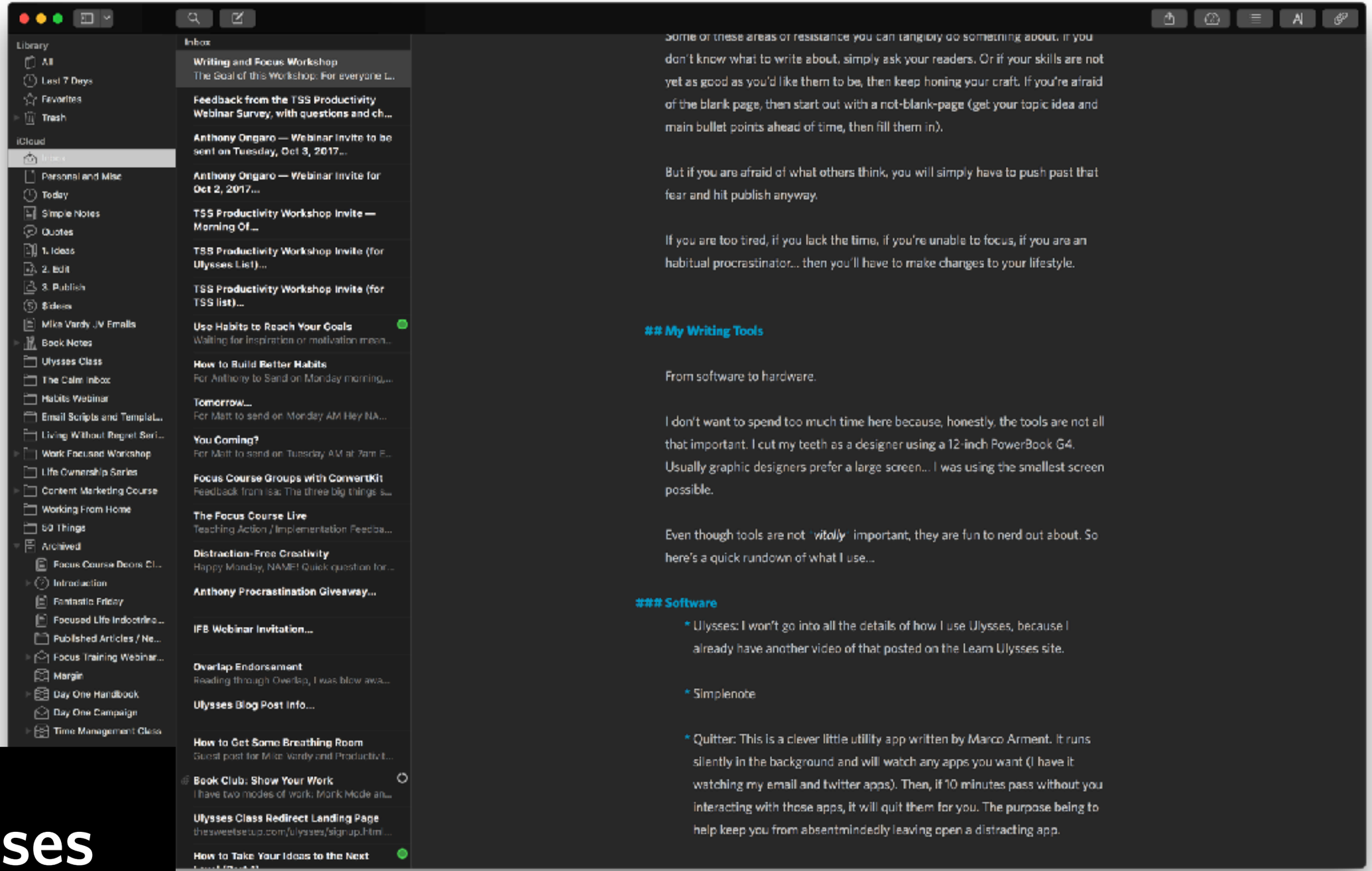
Don’t know how to use the tools you have



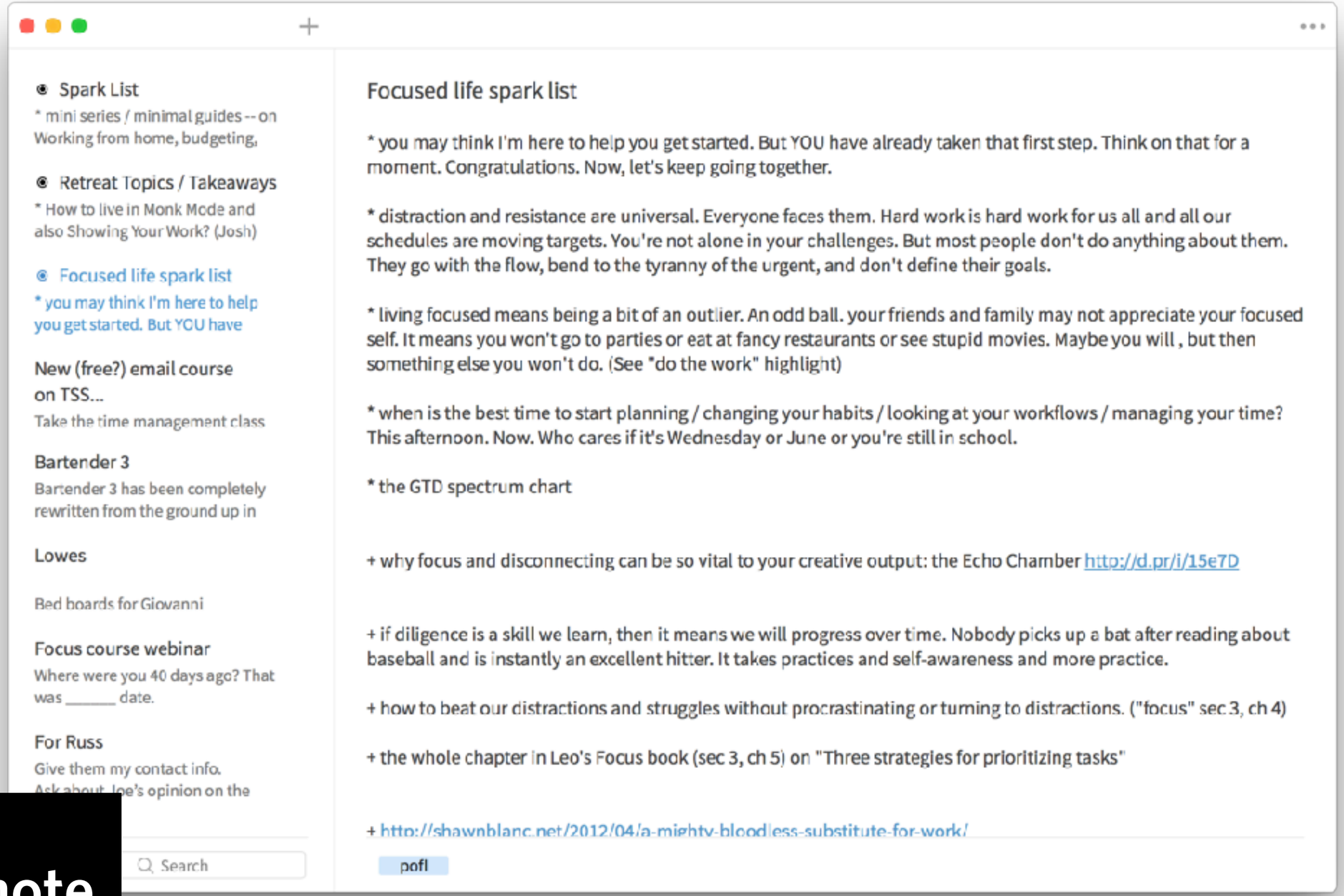
What is an area of resistance you face?

Let us know in the chat.

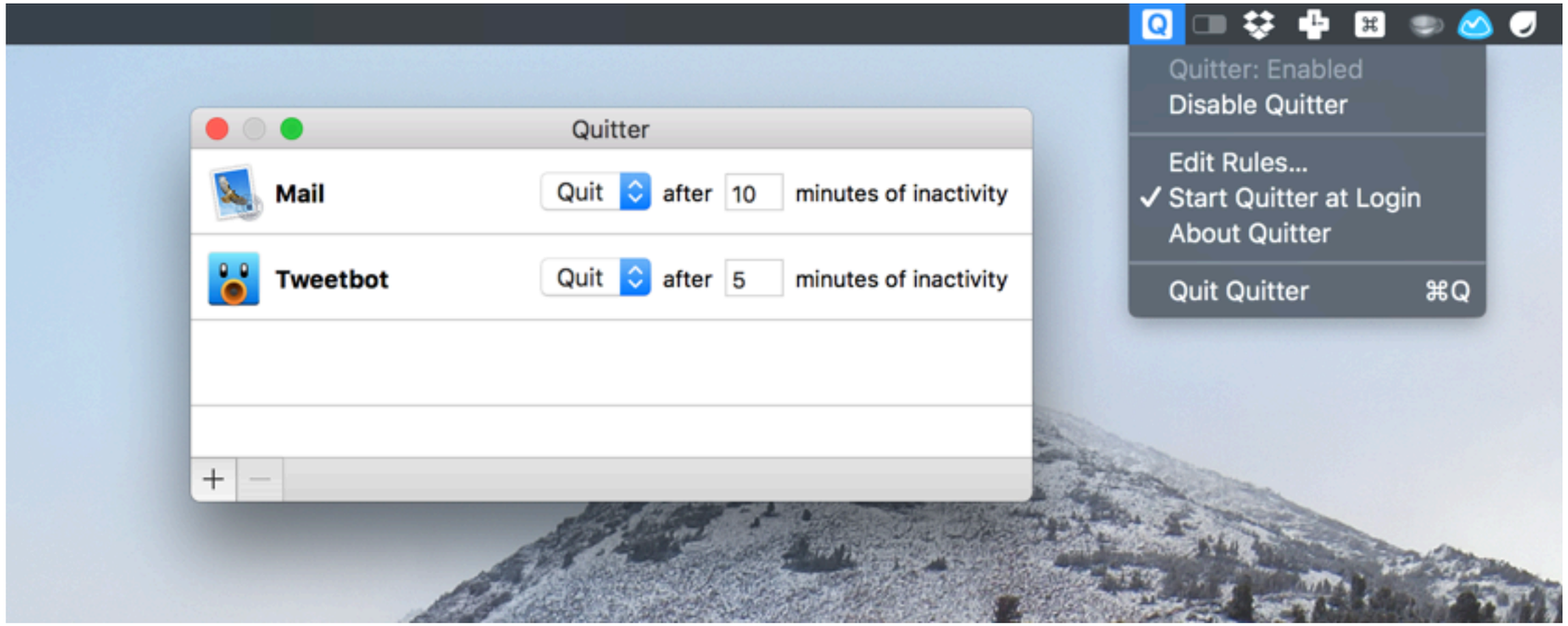
THE TOOLS I USE


Library
All
Last 7 Days
Favorites
Trash
iCloud
Inbox
Personal and Misc
Today
Simple Notes
Quotes
1. Ideas
2. Edit
3. Publish
$ideas
Mike Vardy JV Emails
Book Notes
Ulysses Class
The Calm Inbox
Habits Webinar
Email Scripts and Templat...
Living Without Regret Seri...
Work Focused Workshop
Life Ownership Series
Content Marketing Course
Working From Home
50 Things
Archived
Focus Course Docs Cl...
Introduction
Fantastic Friday
Focused Life Indoctrina...
Published Articles / Ne...
Focus Training Webinar...
Margin
Day One Handbook
Day One Campaign
Time Management Class
Inbox
Writing and Focus Workshop
The Goal of this Workshop: For everyone t...
Feedback from the TSS Productivity Webinar Survey, with questions and ch...
Anthony Ongaro — Webinar invite to be sent on Tuesday, Oct 3, 2017...
Anthony Ongaro — Webinar invite for Oct 2, 2017...
TSS Productivity Workshop Invite — Morning Of...
TSS Productivity Workshop Invite (for Ulysses List)...
TSS Productivity Workshop Invite (for TSS list)...
Use Habits to Reach Your Goals
Waiting for inspiration or motivation mean...
How to Build Better Habits
For Anthony to Send on Monday morning,...
Tomorrow...
For Matt to send on Monday AM Hey NA...
You Coming?
For Matt to send on Tuesday AM at 7am E...
Focus Course Groups with ConvertKit
Feedback from Isa: The three big things s...
The Focus Course Live
Teaching Action / Implementation Feedba...
Distraction-Free Creativity
Happy Monday, NAME! Quick question for...
Anthony Procrastination Giveaway...
IFB Webinar Invitation...
Overlap Endorsement
Reading through Overlap, I was blow awa...
Ulysses Blog Post Info...
How to Get Some Breathing Room
Guest post for Mike Vardy and Productivit...
Book Club: Show Your Work
I have two modes of work: Mark Mode an...
Ulysses Class Redirect Landing Page
thesweetsetup.com/ulysses/signup.html...
How to Take Your Ideas to the Next
Some of these areas of resistance you can tangibly do something about. If you don't know what to write about, simply ask your readers. Or if your skills are not yet as good as you'd like them to be, then keep honing your craft. If you're afraid of the blank page, then start out with a not-blank-page (get your topic idea and main bullet points ahead of time, then fill them in).
But if you are afraid of what others think, you will simply have to push past that fear and hit publish anyway.
If you are too tired, if you lack the time, if you're unable to focus, if you are an habitual procrastinator... then you'll have to make changes to your lifestyle.
My Writing Tools
From software to hardware.
I don't want to spend too much time here because, honestly, the tools are not all that important. I cut my teeth as a designer using a 12-inch PowerBook G4. Usually graphic designers prefer a large screen... I was using the smallest screen possible.
Even though tools are not "vitally" important, they are fun to nerd out about. So here's a quick rundown of what I use...
Software
* Ulysses: I won't go into all the details of how I use Ulysses, because I already have another video of that posted on the Learn Ulysses site.
* Simplenote
* Quitter: This is a clever little utility app written by Marco Arment. It runs silently in the background and will watch any apps you want (I have it watching my email and twitter apps). Then, if 10 minutes pass without you interacting with those apps, it will quit them for you. The purpose being to help keep you from absentmindedly leaving open a distracting app.

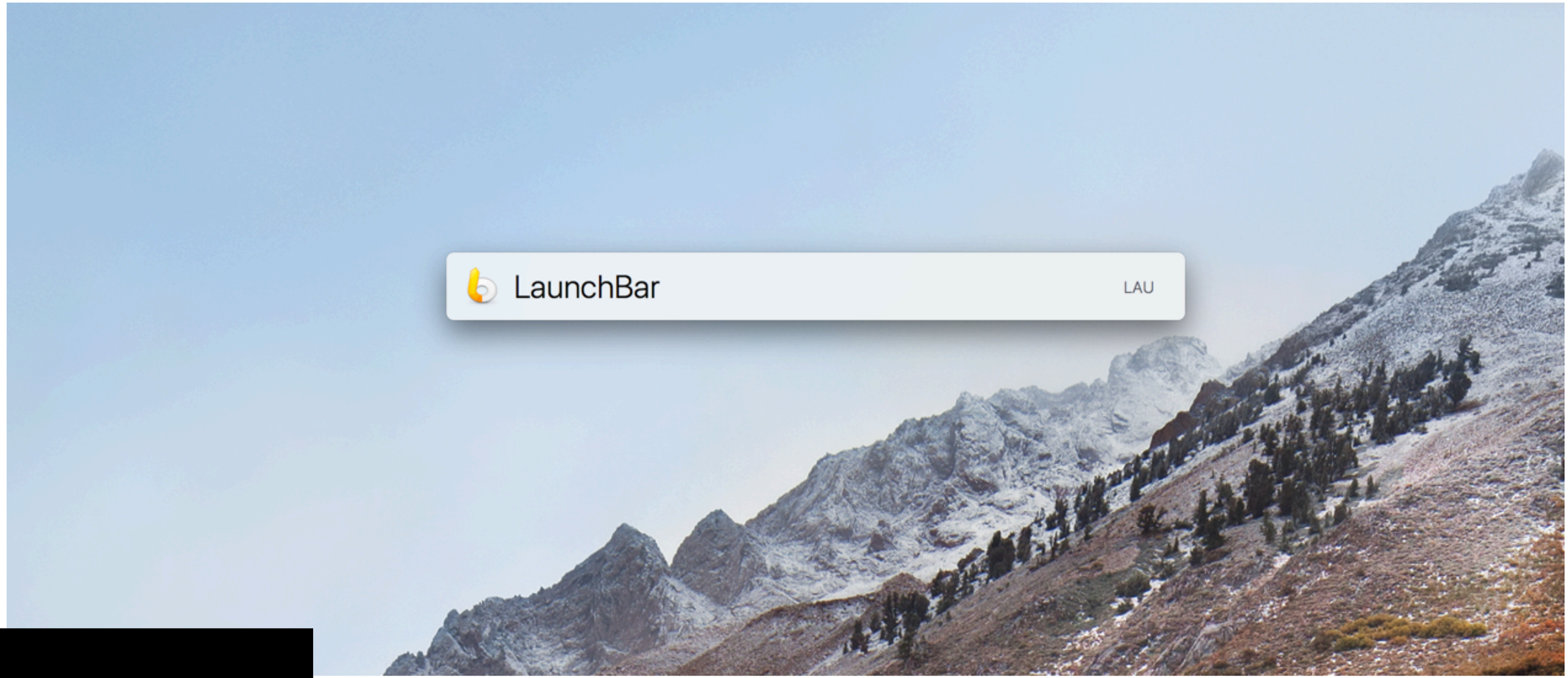
Ulysses


Spark List
* mini series / minimal guides -- on Working from home, budgeting,
Retreat Topics / Takeaways
* How to live in Monk Mode and also Showing Your Work? (Josh)
Focused life spark list
* you may think I'm here to help you get started. But YOU have
New (free?) email course on TSS...
Take the time management class
Bartender 3
Bartender 3 has been completely rewritten from the ground up in
Lowes
Bed boards for Giovanni
Focus course webinar
Where were you 40 days ago? That was _____ date.
For Russ
Give them my contact info.
Search
Focused life spark list
* you may think I'm here to help you get started. But YOU have already taken that first step. Think on that for a moment. Congratulations. Now, let's keep going together.
* distraction and resistance are universal. Everyone faces them. Hard work is hard work for us all and all our schedules are moving targets. You're not alone in your challenges. But most people don't do anything about them. They go with the flow, bend to the tyranny of the urgent, and don't define their goals.
* living focused means being a bit of an outlier. An odd ball. your friends and family may not appreciate your focused self. It means you won't go to parties or eat at fancy restaurants or see stupid movies. Maybe you will , but then something else you won't do. (See "do the work" highlight)
* when is the best time to start planning / changing your habits / looking at your workflows / managing your time? This afternoon. Now. Who cares if it's Wednesday or June or you're still in school.
* the GTD spectrum chart
+ why focus and disconnecting can be so vital to your creative output: the Echo Chamber http://d.pr/i/15e7D
+ if diligence is a skill we learn, then it means we will progress over time. Nobody picks up a bat after reading about baseball and is instantly an excellent hitter. It takes practices and self-awareness and more practice.
+ how to beat our distractions and struggles without procrastinating or turning to distractions. ("focus" sec 3, ch 4)
+ the whole chapter in Leo's Focus book (sec 3, ch 5) on "Three strategies for prioritizing tasks"
+ http://shawnblanc.net/2012/04/a-mighty-bloodless-substitute-for-work/
pofl

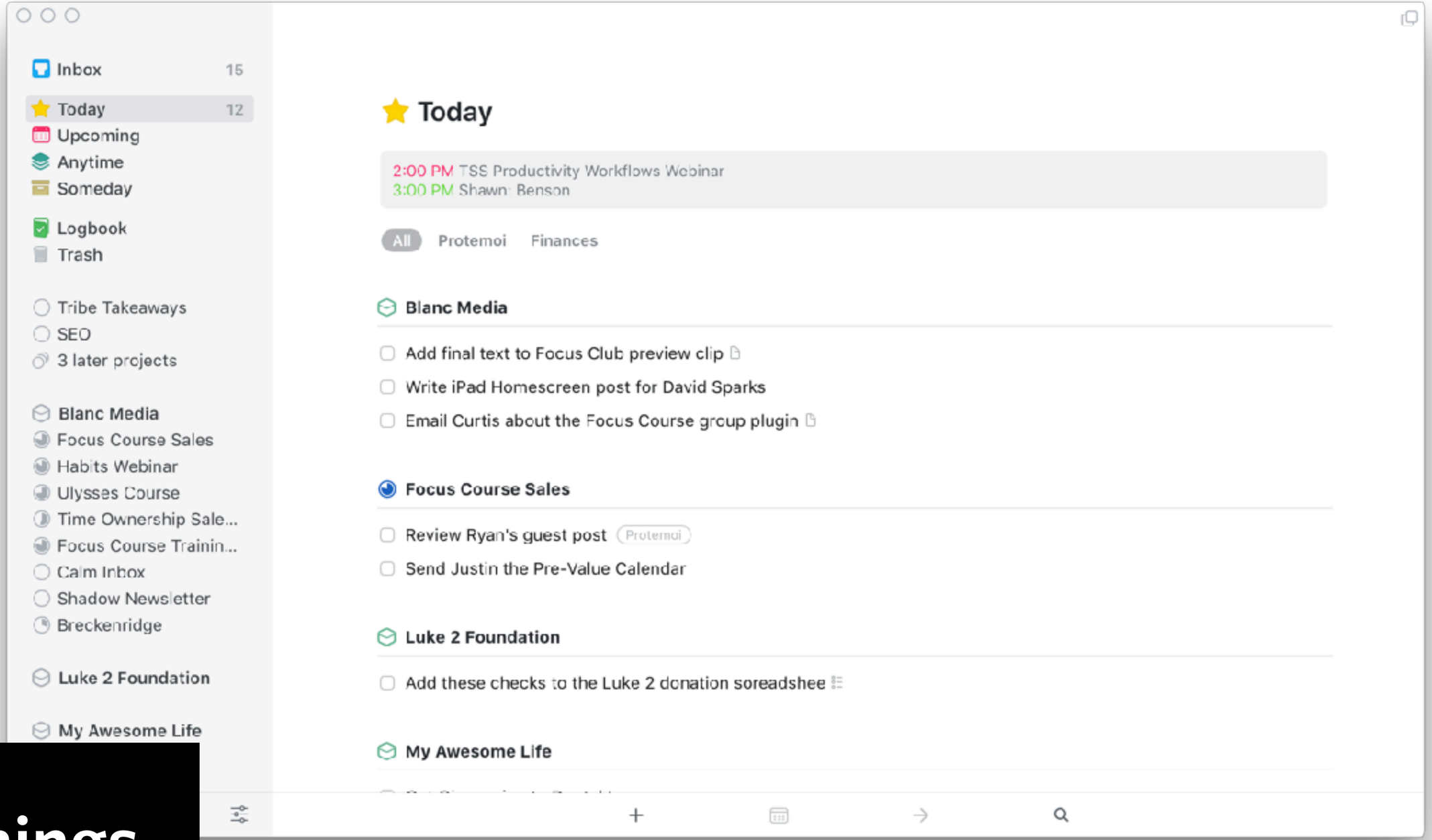
Simplenote


Quitter
Mail
Quit
after
10
minutes of inactivity
Tweetbot
Quit
after
5
minutes of inactivity
Quitter: Enabled
Disable Quitter
Edit Rules...
Start Quitter at Login
About Quitter
Quit Quitter
⌘Q

Quitter



LaunchBar


Inbox 15
Today 12
Upcoming
Anytime
Someday
Logbook
Trash
Tribe Takeaways
SEO
3 later projects
Blanc Media
Focus Course Sales
Habits Webinar
Ulysses Course
Time Ownership Sale...
Focus Course Trainin...
Calm Inbox
Shadow Newsletter
Breckenridge
Luke 2 Foundation
My Awesome Life
Today
2:00 PM TSS Productivity Workflows Webinar
3:00 PM Shawn Benson
All
Protemoi
Finances
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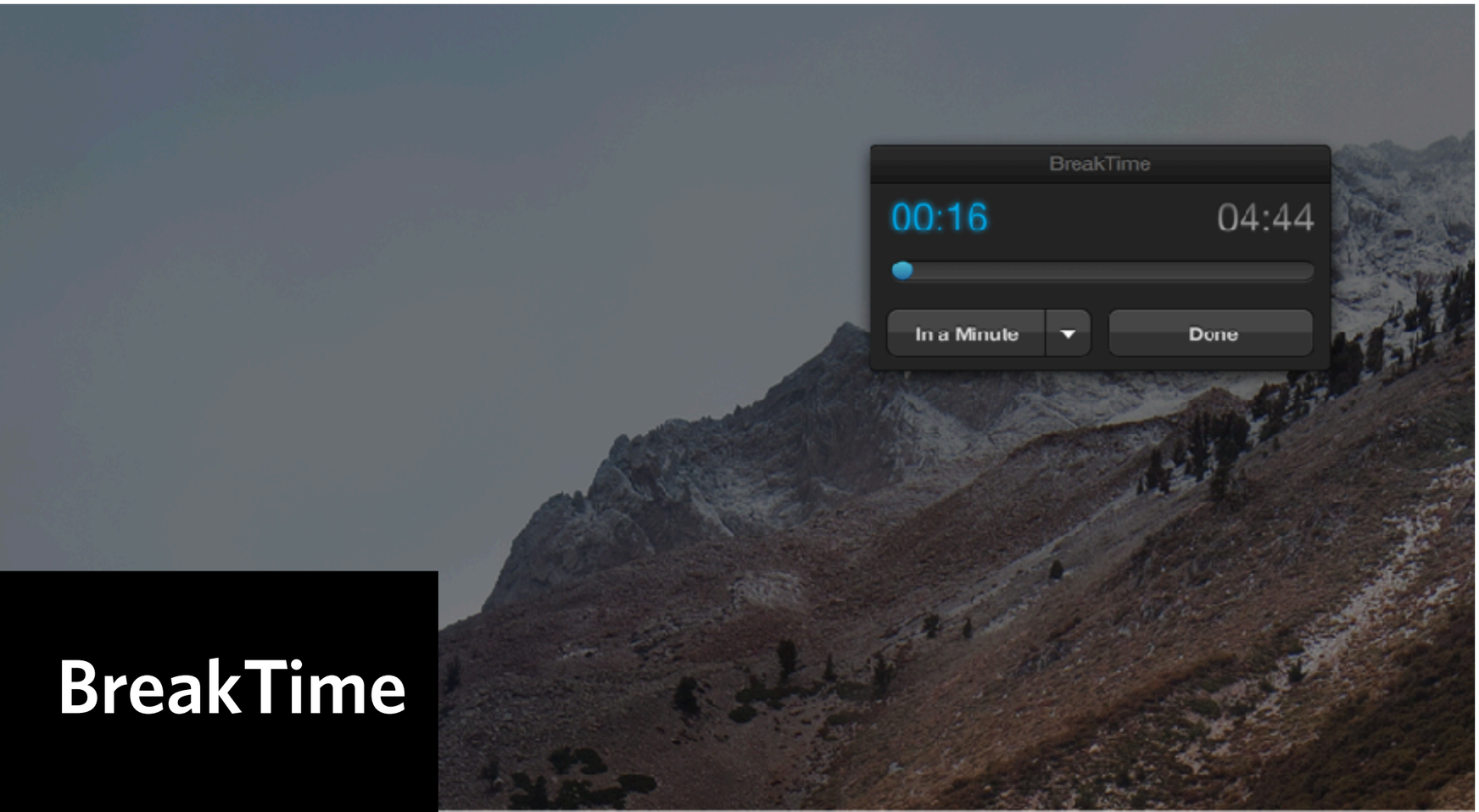
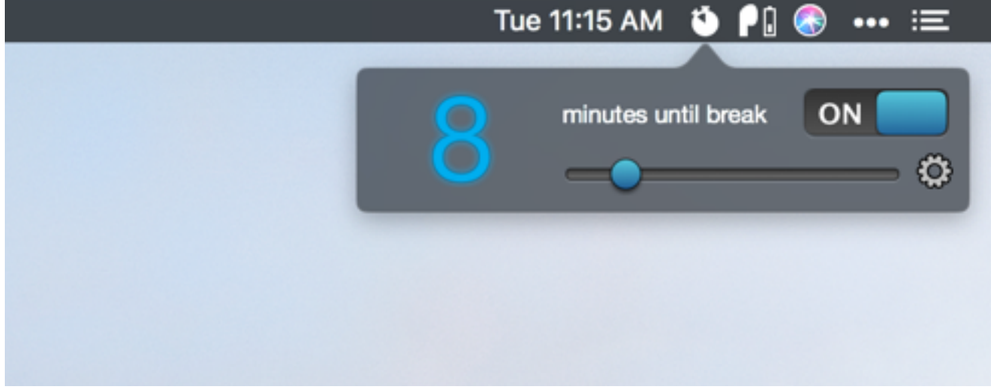
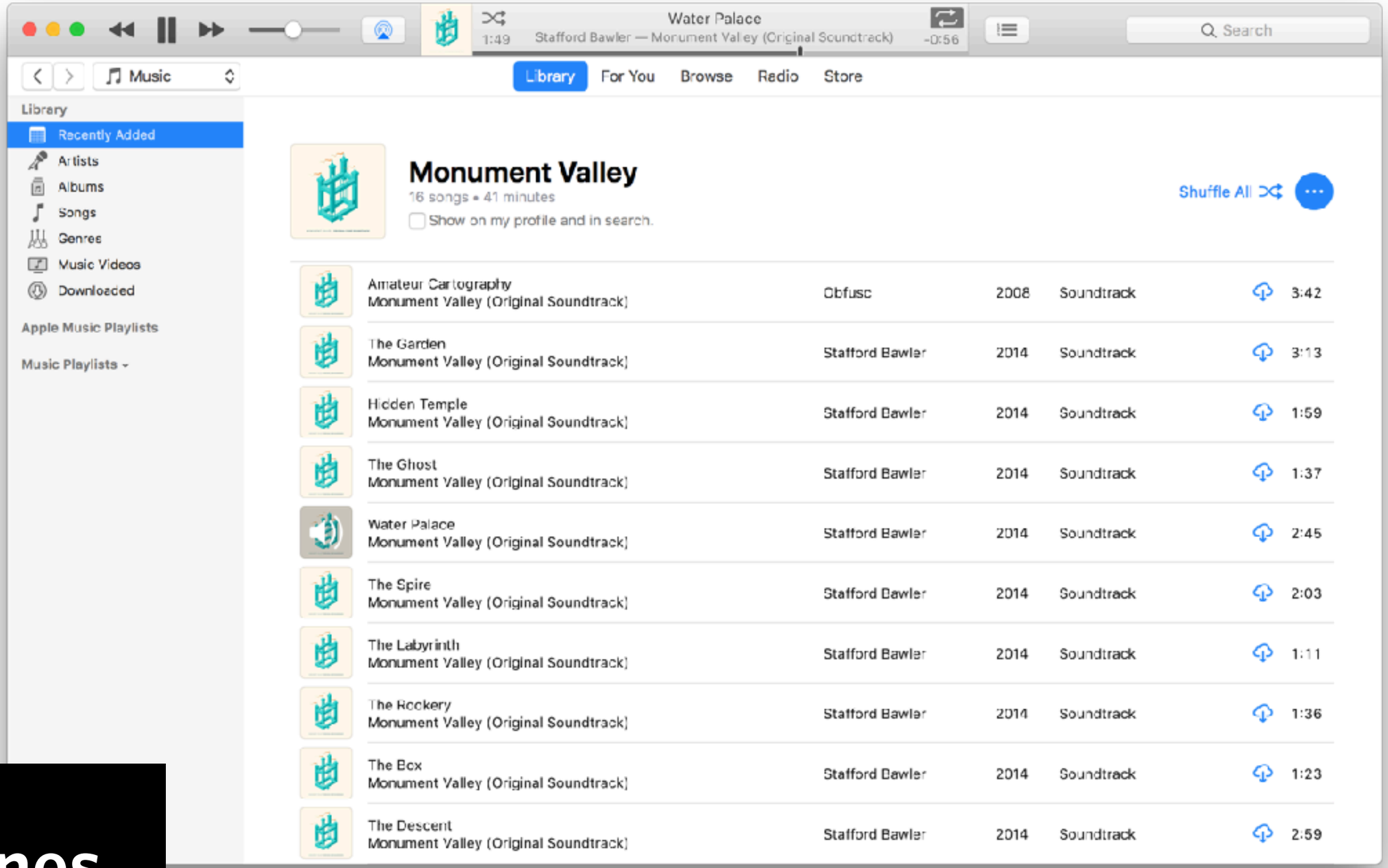
Add final text to Focus Club preview clip
Write iPad Homescreen post for David Sparks
Email Curtis about the Focus Course group plugin
Focus Course Sales
Review Ryan's guest post
Protemoi
Send Justin the Pre-Value Calendar
Luke 2 Foundation
Add these checks to the Luke 2 donation soreadshee
My Awesome Life

Things


BreakTime
00:16
04:44
In a Minute
Done


Tue 11:15 AM
8
minutes until break
ON

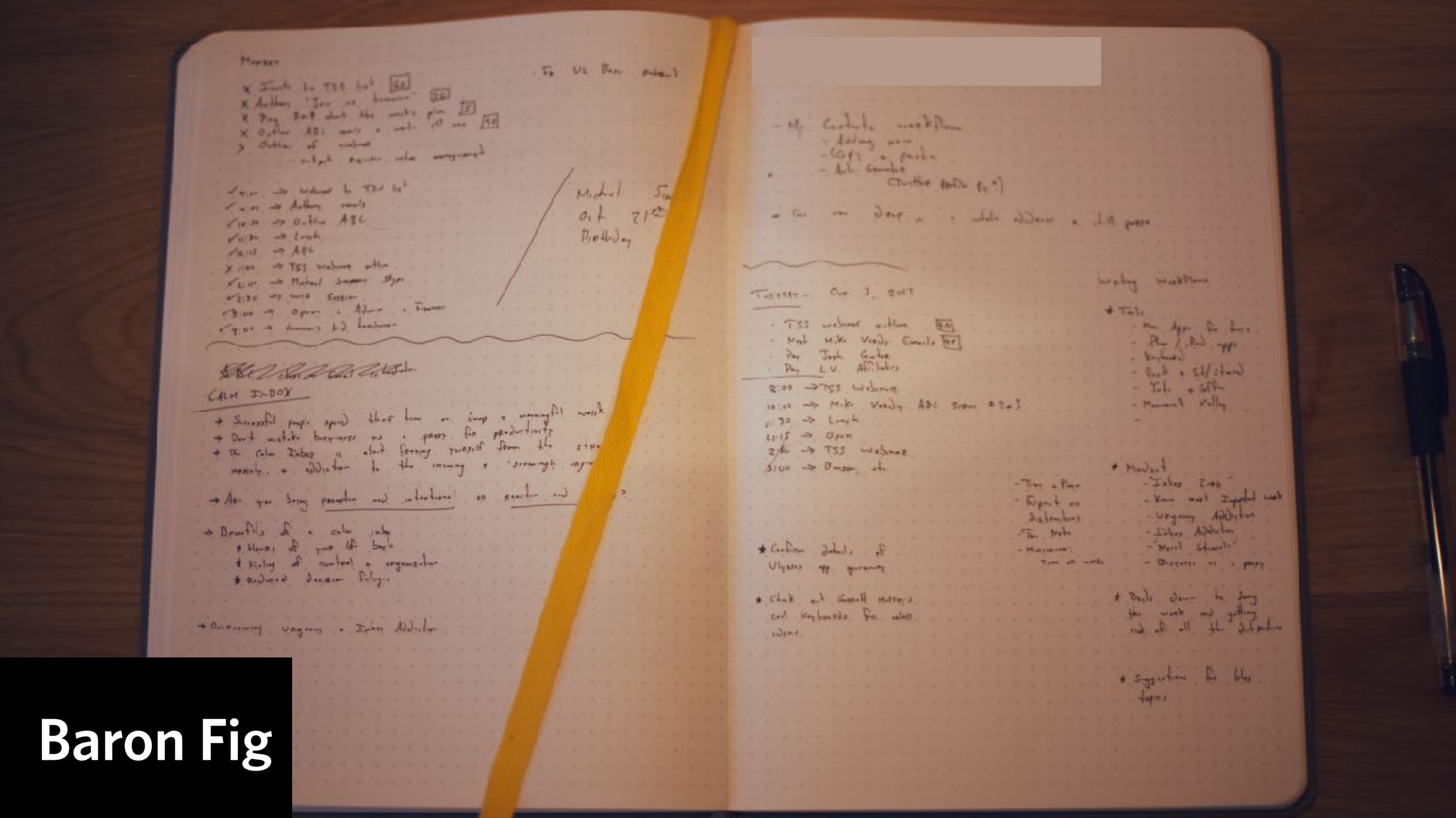
BreakTime


Water Palace
1:49
Stafford Bawler — Monument Valley (Original Soundtrack)
-0:56
Search
Music
Library
For You
Browse
Radio
Store
Library
Recently Added
Artists
Albums
Songs
Genres
Music Videos
Downloaded
Apple Music Playlists
Music Playlists
Monument Valley
16 songs • 41 minutes
Show on my profile and in search.
Shuffle All
Amateur Cartography
Monument Valley (Original Soundtrack)
Obfusc
2008
Soundtrack
3:42
The Garden
Monument Valley (Original Soundtrack)
Stafford Bawler
2014
Soundtrack
3:13
Hidden Temple
Monument Valley (Original Soundtrack)
Stafford Bawler
2014
Soundtrack
1:59
The Ghost
Monument Valley (Original Soundtrack)
Stafford Bawler
2014
Soundtrack
1:37
Water Palace
Monument Valley (Original Soundtrack)
Stafford Bawler
2014
Soundtrack
2:45
The Spire
Monument Valley (Original Soundtrack)
Stafford Bawler
2014
Soundtrack
2:03
The Labyrinth
Monument Valley (Original Soundtrack)
Stafford Bawler
2014
Soundtrack
1:11
The Rockery
Monument Valley (Original Soundtrack)
Stafford Bawler
2014
Soundtrack
1:36
The Box
Monument Valley (Original Soundtrack)
Stafford Bawler
2014
Soundtrack
1:23
The Descent
Monument Valley (Original Soundtrack)
Stafford Bawler
2014
Soundtrack
2:59

iTunes

Keyboard

Keyboard



Baron Fig

WRITING ROUTINE

WRITING ROUTINE

1. Committed to 30 minutes every morning.

2. No inboxes before 9am.

3. Same music.

4. Had a plan; I knew my topic ahead of time.

WRITING ROUTINE

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2. No inboxes before 9am.

3. Same music.

4. Had a plan; I knew my topic ahead of time.

WRITING ROUTINE

Created the *time* to do the work.

Gave me the *focus* to do the work.

TIPS & TRICKS

TIPS & TRICKS

The first 5 minutes are the hardest.

TIPS & TRICKS

Max of 3 or 4 hours per day of deep, focused work.

TIPS & TRICKS

The *anticipation* of interruptions is lethal to your focus.

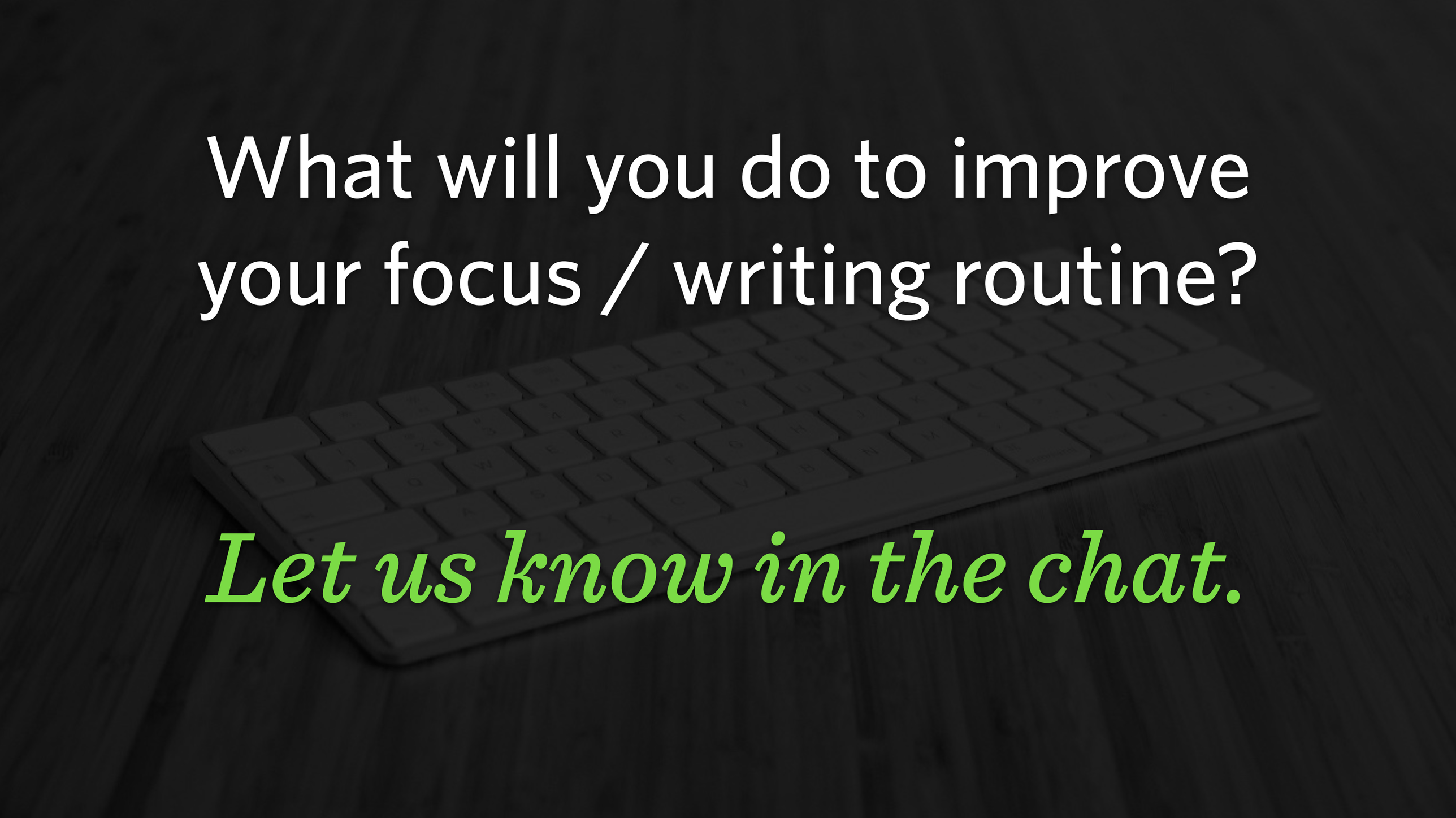
TIPS & TRICKS

Beware “Novel Stimuli” throughout the day.

TIPS & TRICKS

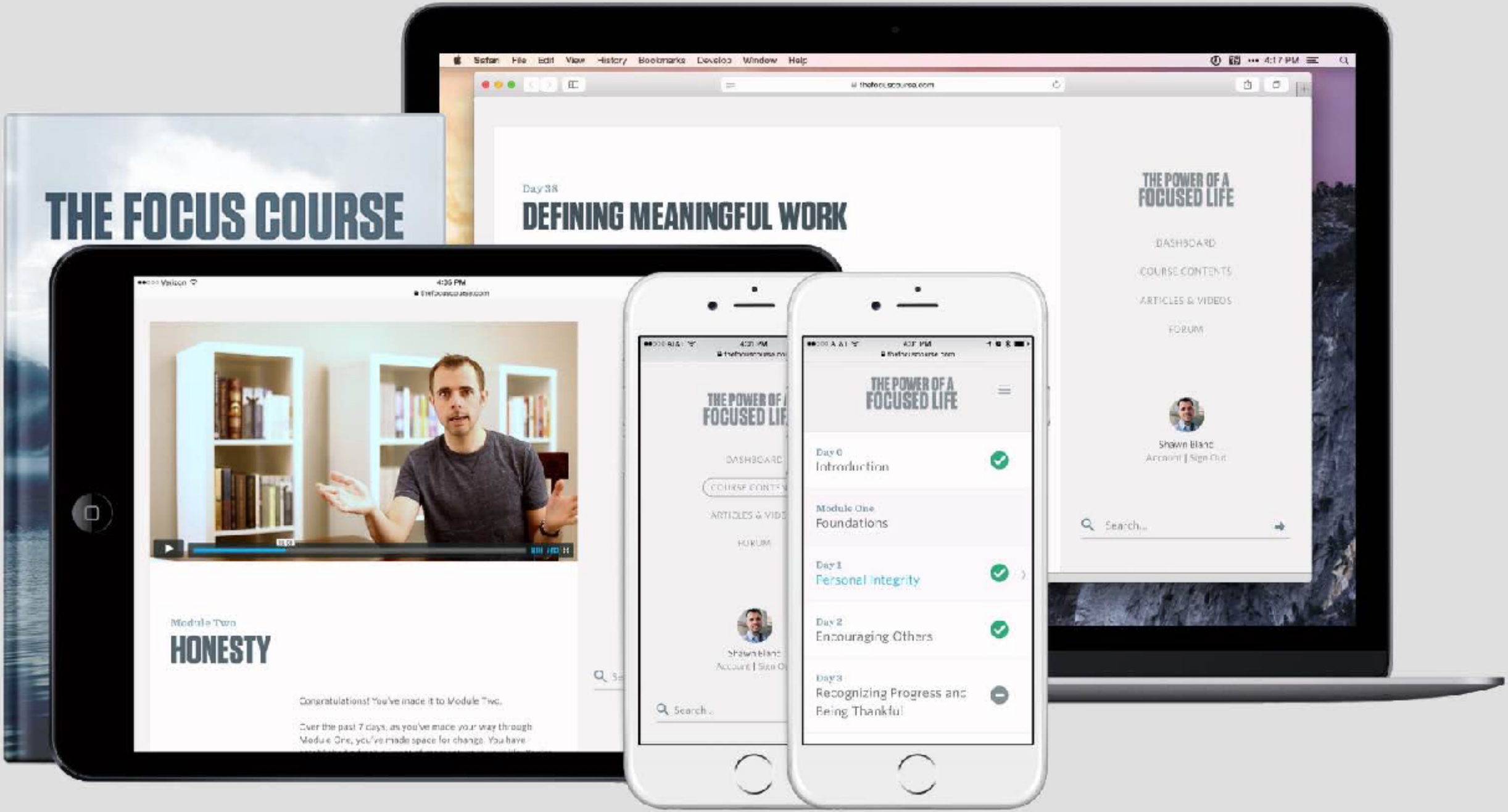
Don’t use “busyness” as a proxy for productivity.

What will you do to improve your focus / writing routine?

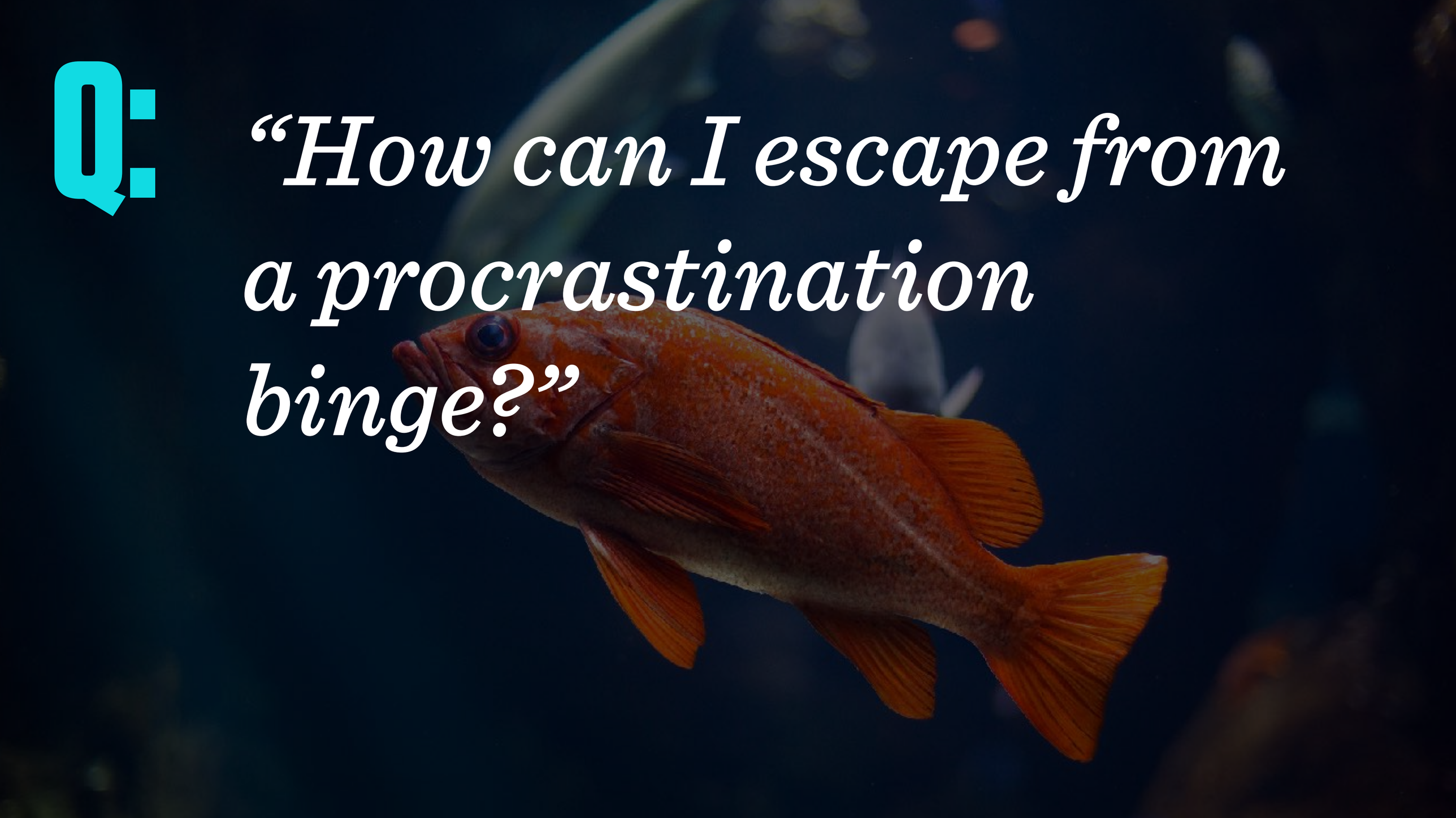


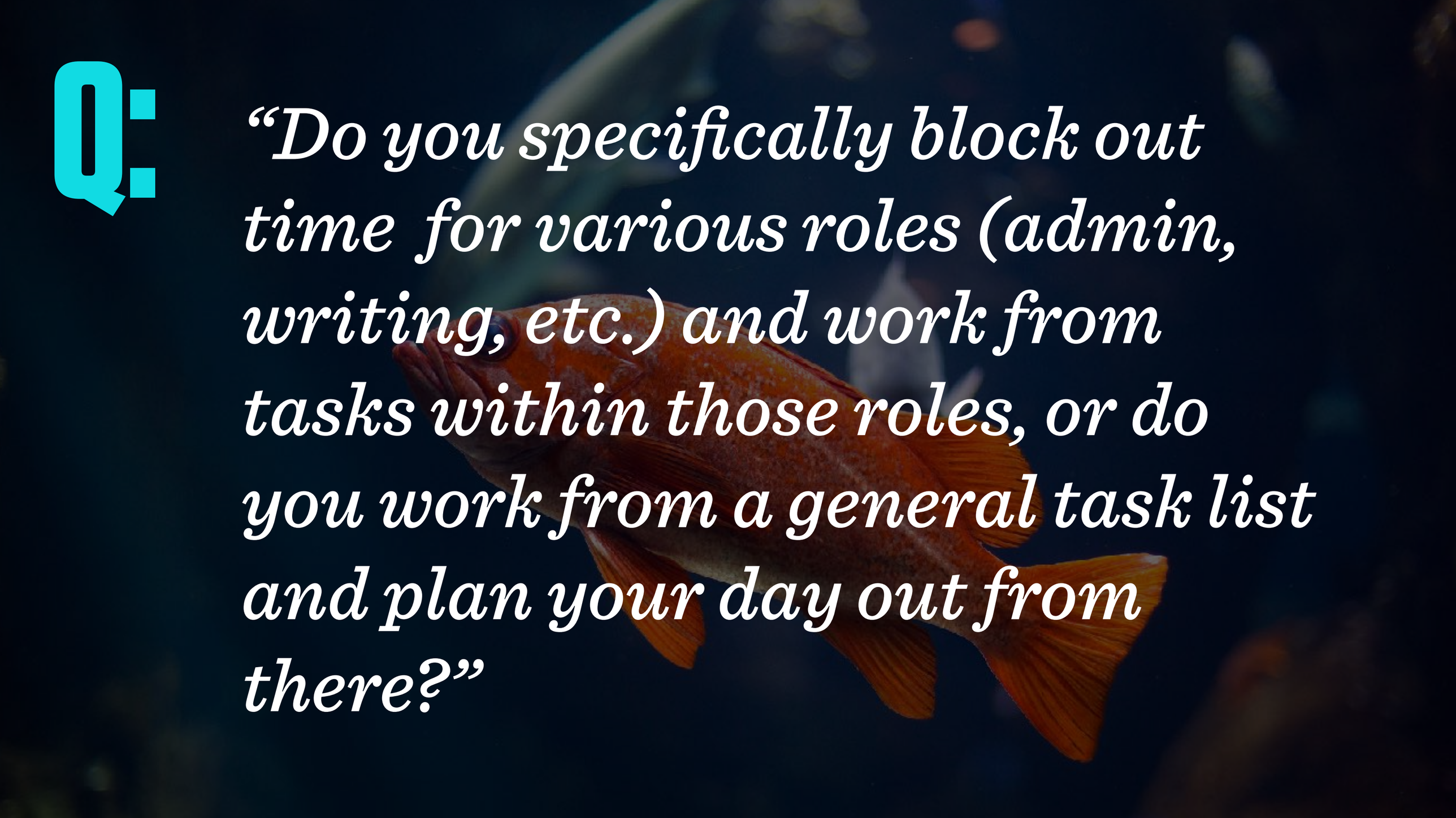
Let us know in the chat.

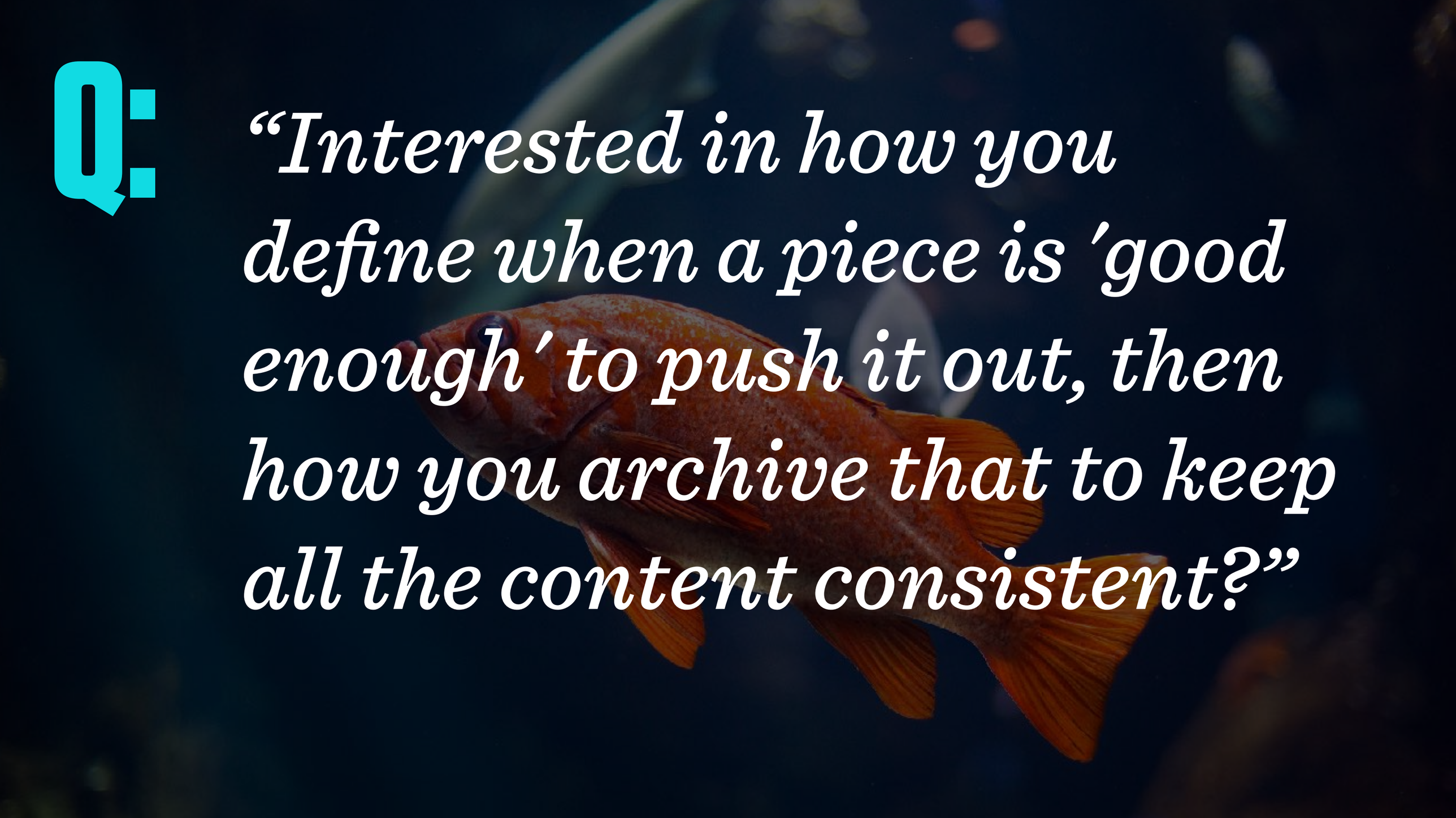
THE POWER OF A FOCUSED LIFE


THE FOCUS COURSE
Day 38
DEFINING MEANINGFUL WORK
THE POWER OF A FOCUSED LIFE
DASHBOARD
COURSE CONTENTS
ARTICLES & VIDEOS
FORUM
Shawn Blanc
Account | Sign Out
Search...
Module Two
HONESTY
Congratulations! You've made it to Module Two.
Over the past 7 days, as you've made your way through Module One, you've made space for change. You have
Day 0
Introduction
Module One
Foundations
Day 1
Personal Integrity
Day 2
Encouraging Others
Day 3
Recognizing Progress and Being Thankful

Q&A
And giveaway...

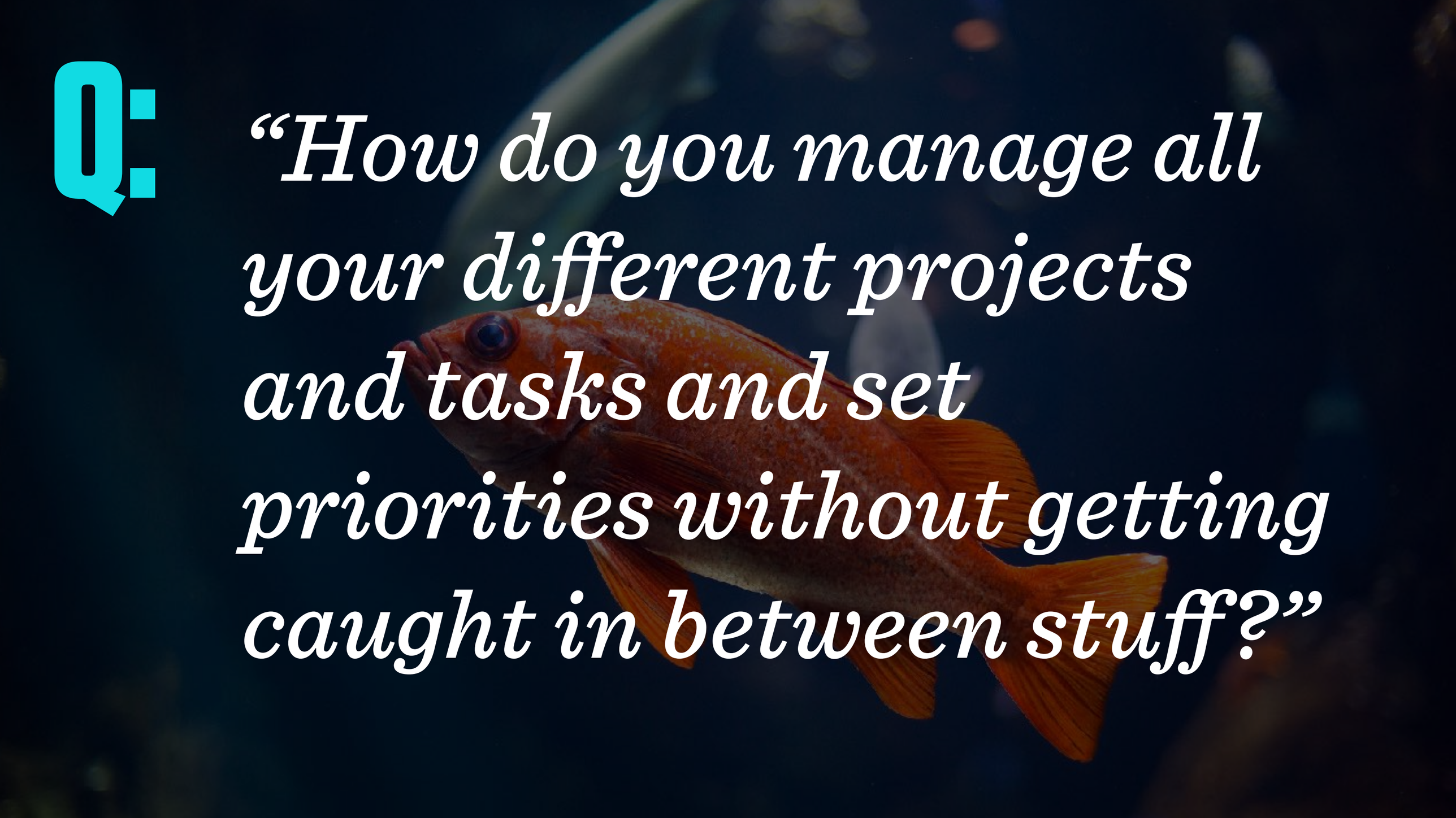

Q:
“How can I escape from a procrastination binge?”


Q:
“Do you specifically block out time for various roles (admin, writing, etc.) and work from tasks within those roles, or do you work from a general task list and plan your day out from there?”



Q:

“Interested in how you define when a piece is ‘good enough’ to push it out, then how you archive that to keep all the content consistent?”



Q:

"How do you manage all your different projects and tasks and set priorities without getting caught in between stuff?"

Q:

“How do I keep everything in balance with so many spinning plates?”