

# Chapter 1 – The Power User Mindset: How To Achieve Your Goals and Experience a High Level of Success

It's no secret that people who are highly organized, motivated to succeed, and unafraid to take action are those that consistently reach their goals and experience a high degree of success.

Just look around you. Who are the people in your circle of influence who are more successful? Who are the people that have achieved more than most of their contemporaries?

Why do you think they've achieved more success, given that they possess the same 168 hours per week that you or I do?

Of course there are many variables at play, but most of the people I know who've achieved extraordinary levels of success -and I'm not just talking financial success, but massive amounts of freedom and satisfaction- are those who have a singular focus and resolve to take action.

Looking back over my 57 years, it's the actions I avoided taking that resulted in most of the painful and unpleasant experiences in my life. I'm convinced had I possessed the level of focus and dedication to achievement that I do now, my life would definitely have taken more positive turns.

## The Power User Mindset Necessary to Achieve Your Goals and Reach Unparalleled Levels of Success

Bullet Journal, as a stand-alone tool, isn't going to make you successful beyond your wildest imaginations. But two essential qualities will.

**LASER Focus & Unrelenting Dedication** This combination of qualities will result in a mindset that is unstoppable. With this level of dedication and singular focus, there is nothing you can't achieve.

So, how do you get from where you are today to developing a mindset with LASER-like focus and singular dedication?

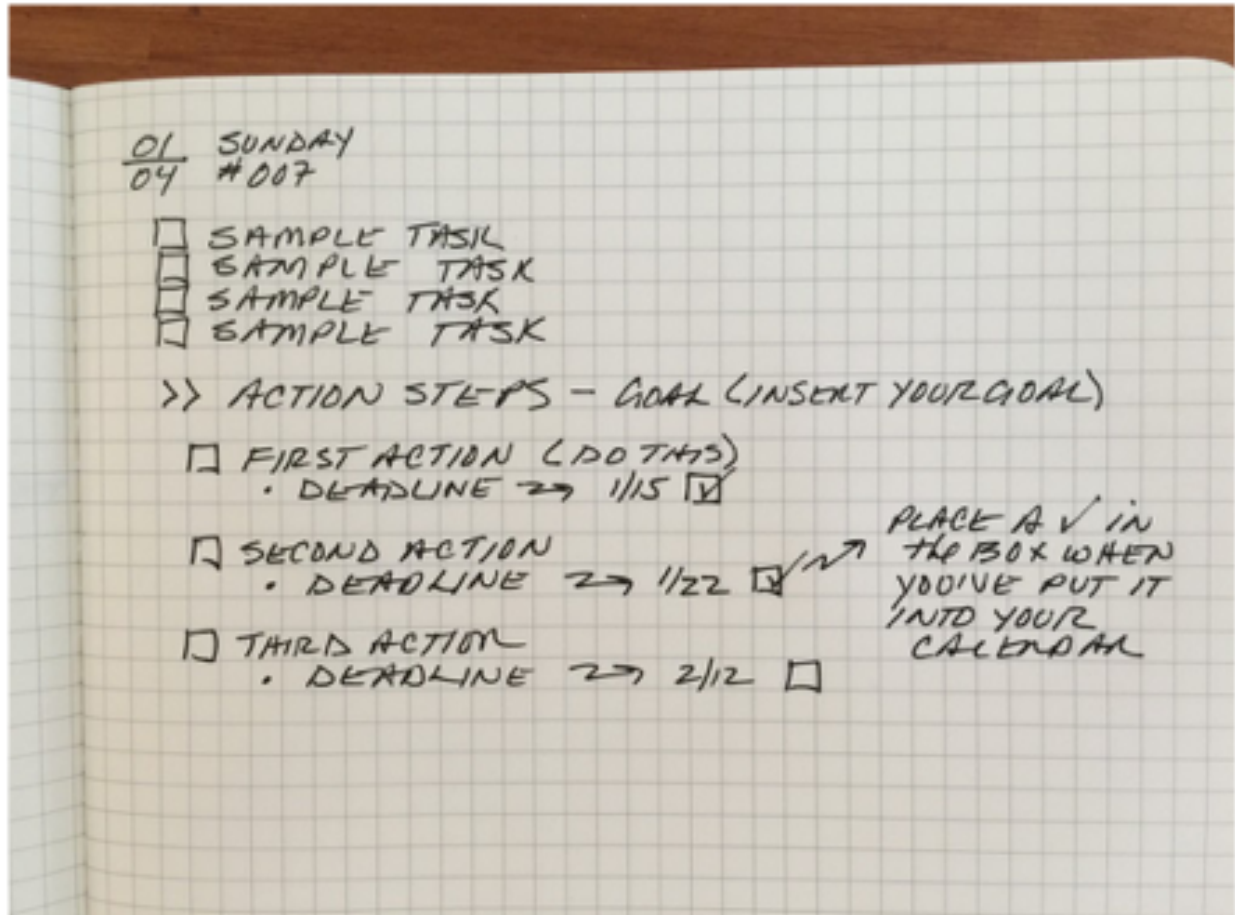
Here are three Action Steps to Take:

- Define your ultimate outcome (what's the best possible result that you want to achieve?)
- Define how you'll know that you've succeeded (what will that success look like and feel like?)
- Take the first action you can (what can you do today to start this process?)

Here's Where Your Bullet Journal Comes Into Play

- Start a new daily journal entry (I use this key for all journal entries: >>) under today's daily entry.
- Label it 'Action Steps.'
- Now list the first action step (from above) that you can take to start things off
- Set a deadline for completing this step and enter it into your monthly calendar Now continue your list of sequential steps you can take to reach this one goal and transfer realistic due dates to your monthly calendar(s) – it may take more than the current month to take all the action required for your goal, so be realistic in your planning

Here's a sample journal entry listing action steps and progress boxes when you've transferred them to your calendar.



This is only the first step in achieving your goals and experiencing a higher degree of success, but it's the most critical. Unless you use your Bullet Journal to its maximum potential, it will just be another planner.

Bullet Journal is so much more than a planner. In fact, Lesson 4 is about why it's not called Bullet Planner. It's called Bullet Journal for a reason. But we'll get to that in a few days.

## Lesson 1 Summary

- Bullet Journal Power Users develop a mindset that includes LASER focus and an unrelenting dedication to achieve their goals. This

mindset leads to achieving the kind of success you've defined. Your Bullet Journal is the one tool that will help you develop these qualities.

- Unless you use Bullet Journal fully, and by fully I mean using it everyday, throughout the day, you'll experience greater resistance in reaching your goals and achieving what you desire.
- What do I mean by using it 'everyday, throughout the day?' You'll find that out in Lesson 2 tomorrow when we cover the three critical practices that will boost your personal performance in any area of your life using your Bullet Journal.
- The overriding goal of this course is to get you to see that having a tool and using it to its fullest potential is the difference between achieving your goals and just writing about them. It's the difference between achieving success -however you define it- and just dreaming about it.
- As we go through this brief eCourse, I want you to keep using your Bullet Journal. In my experience, it's the one tool that can significantly narrow the gap between where you are now and where you see yourself in the future

### Action Steps for Chapter 1:

- Review the photo above and pick a goal that's really juicy...one that you badly want to achieve
- Create the journal entry as I explained above
- List out the steps you need to take – take your time and plan these realistically
- Migrate the deadlines to your monthly calendar and check off the transfer box like I show above so you'll know it's been done
- Take the first action step today! When you do, congratulate yourself! Tweet out that you did using the hashtag #BuJoAction-Step and I'll give you a virtual pat on the back!
- I'll be looking for your tweet! 😊

## Chapter 2 – Three Powerful Bullet Journal Practices That Will Boost Your Personal Performance

Those who experience a high degree of success are those who consistently set goals and implement powerful practices that boost their performance.

These practices don't have to be monumentally difficult processes. In my experience, the more simple an application or process, the more powerful it is.

There are three practices that I use to increase my own personal

performance in my personal and business planning using my Bullet Journal. They're similar, but have different outcomes.

## **My Three Power Practices to Boost Personal Performance**

As a writer and creator, I'm the first to admit that there are no new ideas, only adaptations of existing ones. Having said this, what follows are adaptations of pre-existing ideas and practices that I use to organize my Bullet Journal and boost my personal performance.

### **The First Practice – Create a Personal Mission Statement**

Mission Statements are usually dry, boring platitudes that corporations create to make them sound more human and less threatening. But too often they simply fall flat and no one can ever remember what they are much less what they're for.

A personal mission statement is much different. About 20 years ago, when I was a young father of four growing children, and in the middle of my career, I created the following personal mission statement.

To lead when prudent;  
To give until empty;  
To love without reservation;

To pursue knowledge;  
To seek wisdom;  
To know truth.

It took me about a year to draft it. It began as wild, rambling journal entries and ultimately, through much effort, I reduced it to these six concise statements that summarize those outcomes in life that I maintain are the most important.

These brief statements guide me daily to become the person I want those closest to me to remember.

The task of formulating a truly personal mission statement can profoundly affect your life and those around you. I recommend it to you as a starting point in your remaining journey.

If you don't already have a mission statement, get started in your Bullet Journal today. It comes into play in the remaining practices in a way that will benefit you more if you've taken the time to formulate one of your own.

### **The Second Practice – Conduct Regular Reviews**

Conducting a review of your day, week, month, and year can yield unbelievable benefits and clarity. It allows you to survey the forest instead of continually hugging a tree.

I practice three reviews on a regular basis. (I also conduct an annual review but since it occurs only once a year, we'll leave that out for now.)

The three reviews are:

- The Daily Review
- The Weekly Review
- The Monthly Review

Conducting these reviews will help refine and clarify your goals, expose areas in your planning where you can improve, and streamline your life.

Let's look at each of these reviews.

#### **The Daily Review**

The daily review consists of several processes that include:

- Use the time in your daily reviews, to review your calendar and daily task list and migrate any incomplete action items for the day. Next prioritize action items for the day, and make plans to achieve



them.

- Only list tasks that you must get done.

Some have difficulty with this step and overload their task lists with needless boxes and then find that they migrate too many tasks each day.

Some will prefer to do this step at night for the next day, and some will prefer to conduct the review at the start of the day – this is my preference as I'm usually dead tired at night. I believe that this is a place where personal preference is necessary.

The key to the daily review being successful is to have a quiet place and time you can think about the day you are planning.

Use this daily review session to focus on your calendar. Review the appointments, meetings, and activities you scheduled for that day. Now familiarize yourself with every time commitment you have made for the day, and determine if you can reasonably accomplish everything based around the time you have available.

### **Prioritize Action Items**

Use this process to think about everything you want to accomplish for this day. It's here that you may find that some tasks are no longer relevant and can be eliminated in your Bullet Journal.

### **The Weekly Review**

The Weekly Review is the most time consuming because it's the most critical.

It's the longest of the three reviews. That's because it's easier to shift after a bad week than a bad month. Make the weekly review a priority.

### **Weekly Evaluation**

During the weekly review, you will spend time evaluating your past week, current roles (family, work, friendships, and self), goals, and your

action items lists.

### **Past Week Review**

The next step is to review your previous week.

- What went well?
- What could be adjusted?
- What to stop doing?
- What to start doing?
- What to continue doing?

At this point in my weekly review I look at my personal mission statement and evaluate if the week under review helped me become who I want to be? If not, I adjust for it in the coming week.

This is a great way to use the journal aspect of Bullet Journal weekly on a weekly basis. You can then go back, and look at your life again, and see how far you have come and reflect on what you've done and make any adjustments you may need for the upcoming week.

### **Review and Select Your Roles**

Steven Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, urges us to identify our life roles, i.e., Husband/Wife, Father/Mother, Boyfriend/Girlfriend, Partner, Friend, Son/Daughter, Employer/Employee.

He further thinks that we should organize our time and tasks around these roles. While I agree that roles play an important part of our time management and should be taken into account, I don't think they are the prime mover as Covey does.

For purposes of the weekly review, I think about my roles and note how each will be affected by the coming week's commitments. Then I make adjustments as necessary.

### **Identify Weekly Goals**

Now you'll identify any goals you may have that are related to your

roles – work/family/relationship/recreations, etc. What goals do you have set to accomplish for the week? Record these in a weekly goals collection for the coming week. I suggest setting at least one goal in each area, even if it is small, and easily done. This will help you to find balance in your life.

### **Project Review**

I use this portion of my weekly review to look at my projects -creative projects, work projects, and anything else that needs my focused attention- and plan for them in my look ahead to the next week.

### **Select Actions for the Week**

Now that you know what roles, personal goals, projects, and actions for the coming week are, record those as either collections or schedule them into your monthly calendar.

### **The Monthly Review**

The monthly review is brief. If you've done your homework during your weekly reviews, the monthly review is a breeze. 😊

The monthly review is a good time to look at the weekly review journal entries for the previous month, and look for any patterns. This review can be short, and just added to the weekly review of the first week in the month.

Also take the time to review your weekly goals for the preceding month and see where you succeeded or didn't. Then adjust for the coming month.

Finally, review your Personal Mission Statement. Did your month reflect positively on this mission?

### **The Third Practice – Journaling**

We'll discuss this in more detail on Day 4, but for now begin making it a habit to use the journal aspect of your Bullet Journal. I've found that I gain most of my insights into my success, and/or lack thereof, by writing about my week – I even do this throughout the week.

If you've not been a journal writer in the past, try it for a week. During your Daily Review, simply make a >>Journal Entry on a new line and write about how the day went. Write about how you'd do it differently if you could replay it.

Then look at what you've written and with the insight you just wrote about, use it to plan the next day with a bit more wisdom.

## Action Steps for Chapter 2

- If you don't have a personal mission statement, craft one
- Take your time and don't rush it
- Schedule a time to conduct your first daily review
- Experiment with times that work best for you
- Do the same for your next weekly and monthly reviews
- Take the first action step today! When you do, congratulate yourself!
- Tweet out that you did using the hashtag *#BuJoActionStep* and I'll give you a virtual tweet on the back!

## Chapter 3 – Two Powerful Decisions That Can Exponentially Increase Your Bullet Journal's Effectiveness

**Powerful outcomes are only made possible by powerful decisions.**

In this lesson I'm going to share with you two decisions I made early on

in my Bullet Journal use that have made a huge difference in my productivity.

Both, in my opinion, are necessary to becoming a Power User. I'll discuss why I think this is a requirement after I share my two decisions.

### **Decision 1: Use Only One Notebook**

I've [written previously](#) about using only one Bullet Journal notebook as opposed to using several notebooks all contained in one Midori-style cover. In my opinion, using more than one notebook for your Bullet Journal is a mistake.

### **The Split Brain Factor**

Imagine for a minute that you have four laptops that you use every day. You use:

- one computer for email
- one computer for calendar
- one computer for projects
- one computer for social media

To complete a single project could require you to jump back and forth between computers multiple times each day. Can you imagine how time consuming that would be?

You'd constantly have to go back and forth between laptops to check your schedule, make notes on a project, and allocate resources for both time and money.

This complicated use of four laptops would, for me, create a split-brain syndrome of sorts. Having your attention divided across laptops or notebooks detracts from your goal of LASER-like focus.

Now I realize that this is a totally absurd example. No one in his or her right mind would tolerate such an arrangement. But consider the similarities between this multiple laptop scenario and the multiple notebooks that are used in a Midori style arrangement where there are separate booklets for each function.

If you're using the Midori style multiple booklet system, by definition you aren't using Bullet Journal.

### **Bullet Journal as a Life Management System**

To use your Bullet Journal solely as a to-do list is the miss the point of the entire system. Bullet Journal, for those with insight and perseverance, is a life management system that's free of distraction allowing you to focus on what's important in your life.

When I started using Bullet Journal, I immediately saw the risk of splitting my attention between any number of notebooks. I read how others divided their Bullet Journal into several smaller notebooks in the Midori-style while others maintained a Bullet Journal and a planner. I can only scratch my head at this.

The beauty and simplicity of the Bullet Journal system is that it's a comprehensive life management system in one notebook. Any duplication of notebooks, by definition, isn't a true Bullet Journal system. It's not even a modification; it's a duplication of both effort and organization.

### ***The Personal / Professional Divide***

In a blog post I wrote recently, I made the case for using only one Bullet Journal and several readers responded that there were situations whereby one wouldn't want to mix work and personal information together.

While I can understand this from an intellectual perspective, it doesn't work for me. I currently work from home as a consultant and I deal with confidential information every day. I've tried juggling separate work and personal notebooks and I always come up against one persistent barrier.

***I have one life.***

Because I view my personal and professional pursuits as subsets of my life, I've never been able to separate them into distinct personal and professional spheres. Instead of a Venn diagram with overlapping personal and professional circles, for me both spheres are fully combined.

Therefore, I need a life management system that allows me to fully manage my life as it unfolds in both the personal and professional spheres. If you also view your life in this way, Bullet Journal is the perfect life management system.

### **Decision 2: I Limit My Daily Tasks to MITs Only**

MIT's are my most important tasks. It these that I note on my daily task lists and not everything that needs to be done. I reserve this list for the Monthly Master Task List. By exerting a strict level of control over my daily tasks lists, I migrate fewer tasks and experience less frustration with not getting things done.

One of the chief complaints about Bullet Journal's daily task list is the number of incomplete or unaddressed tasks that ultimately need to be migrated to the next daily entry. I learned this lesson early on by daily noting what chores I needed to get done that day.

*Do you know how many times I migrated the “Do the Damn Dishes” task? Too many times to count until I realized this was a misuse of the system as designed.*

It's usually where most people fail with Bullet Journal. The daily task list is the place where the must-get-done tasks are listed for that day. Focusing on the mundane chores that really won't sink your personal or professional ship if they are left incomplete is a time-wasting activity.

### **Why You Also Need To Make These Decisions**

I said at the beginning of this lesson that I would share why I thought these two decisions were critical and necessary to becoming a Bullet Journal Power User. I strongly suggest that you also make these two

practices a part of your Bullet Journal routine.

### Using One Notebook

As I said before, splitting your efforts between Bullet Journals for personal and work, while some will swear by it, will for most lead to frustration. You might be the exception, but there are probably few like you in the overall population of true Bullet Journal users.

Like the example I described of using multiple laptop for individual function, using multiple notebooks for different purposes isn't what the original Bullet Journal video and website described, neither is it a modification. It's something altogether different.

*When you alter a system so much that it is totally unlike it's description, in my opinion, it becomes a distraction.*

Using one notebook will only reinforce your use of Bullet Journal and assist you in managing your entire life's pursuits.

### Limiting Your Daily Tasks to MITs

Limiting your daily task list to only those that absolutely have to be done will save you hours over a single week's span. If you routinely list 10-15 tasks every day and find that when you conduct your weekly review that you're migrating, say 40 percent or more, this is a sign you need to limit your daily entries.

The goal of Bullet Journal to boost your productivity, not increase your frustration with your management system.

By exerting more control over your MITs and listing only those on your daily entries, you'll experience greater progress, less time spent migrating tasks, and less frustration overall.

## Action Steps for Chapter 3

- Write a journal entry about how you view using one notebook.



- If you're a Midori user or have one Bullet Journal for work and another for personal, consider experimenting with one notebook for an entire month; I think you'll find it makes more sense.
- Review your daily tasks lists for the last month; how many did you migrate? A lot? More than you think is necessary?
- Begin using the MIT tasks list as described above
- Take the first action step today! When you do, congratulate yourself! Tweet out that you did using the hashtag #BuJoActionStep and I'll give you a virtual pat on the back!

## Chapter 4 – How To Use Bullet Journal to Explode Your Insight and Fuel Your Creativity... Even If You're a Left-Brained Engineer or a Horn-Rimmed Bespectacled Accountant

**Too often, society labels adults as either creative / non-creative or artistic / non-artistic: Bullet Journal Power Users bridge the gap by taking advantage of an often-overlooked feature.**

I used to work in an industry that prized the training and background of engineers and treated those us with communication skills like writing, editing, and training as second-class citizens.

Engineering firms, technology companies, accounting agencies, medical research firms...the list of industries that attempt label us and reward

us based on those labels is endless.

Big business tends to reinforce this notion that we're either this or that. If you're a this, you get paid far more than if you're a that. The cycle continues and rarely gets interrupted.

## **Bullet Journal Power Users Know How To Bridge the Gap Between This and That**

*I like to say that this wonderfully adaptive system we're using was called Bullet Journal for a reason.*

It doesn't matter if you're a poet or a novelist, a computer programmer geek, an accountant, or an engineer, you can use Bullet Journal to enhance your creativity and bridge the gap between your left and right brains.

The one feature that Bullet Journal affords any user is unlimited space. Because there are no pre-allocated pages like the ones you'll find in off-the-shelf planner systems like Franklin-Covey, At-A-Glance, and Filofax, the Bullet Journal user is free to use as much space as is needed for any given day's activity.

Unlimited space allows users to take as much space as needed to write about what happened during the day when conducting a daily review or weekly ([see Lesson 2](#)) or exploring a personal or even professional topic.

*Bullet Journaling is what separates Power Users from casual users of system.*

Journal writing, unfortunately, has gotten a reputation over the years as a largely feminine undertaking. This is fine if you're a woman but there are far less men who identify with the practice.

This is, in my opinion, based on the sheer volume of journal products available that have soft, pastel colors, gold-tipped pages, and pre-

allocated writing prompts.

Journal writing has become synonymous with keeping a diary and this idea precludes most men, especially left-brained engineers and accountants, from engaging in this highly beneficial practice.

### **Journal Writing: YouTube's Predecessor**

Somewhere between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, Western culture started downplaying the important habit of recording our thoughts, feelings, and reactions to current events in hand-written notebooks. For generations these writings were handwritten; Presidents, public figures, celebrities, authors... all practice the habit that today we call journal writing.

In a curious way, YouTube and the world of online video has nearly replaced, and in some cases enhanced, this crucial form of self-exploration. Let's face it; the vast majority of YouTube videos (based on the number of videos uploaded each day) are crap when it comes to offering us insight into our own thoughts and ideas.

YouTube is a hugely useful resource, but it won't give you the level of raw self-exploration that journal writing offers.

### **How To Use Your Bullet Journal to Become a Better Adult with Journal Writing**

First off, let me provide you with a better definition for journal writing that may help you view it as a worthwhile undertaking:

*Journal writing is the handwritten exploration of one's own thoughts and ideas.*

Knowing what we think and feel is a critical step for most adults. It's part of the basic skill set for adulthood. But getting to know our thoughts and ideas isn't a destination-oriented journey. It's a process.

That process is best practiced, in my opinion, in the written medium. Writing allows us to see what our thoughts and ideas look like and feel like. Reading over what we've written about a topic is educational and sometimes surprising.

It allows us to view facets of our personality that aren't captured by a Myers-Briggs personality inventory. It allows us to go beyond the surface thoughts of our nonsensically-chattering monkey minds and delve into the deeper motivations and needs that are buried beneath.

If you're working in a creative field, chances are high that you already writing in a journal, whether online or offline, to explore your thoughts and ideas. If you work in a more logic-oriented field like engineering, accounting, computer science, etc., you may not have developed this habit.

### **How To Develop the Habit of Exploring Your Thoughts and Ideas in Your Bullet Journal**

First off, know that writing is the most valuable tool you have, as a human being, for self-exploration. No other activity will offer you the level of insight into how your mind works. It's the most powerful ability afforded you by our highly-evolved brain.

## **Actions Steps for Chapter 4**

Here are some ideas for getting started.

- When you conduct your daily review, write a single paragraph the best part of your day.
- When you conduct your weekly review, write a paragraph for each of the following:
  - What was the highlight of the week?
  - What was the low-point of the week?
  - What triggered the low-point of the week?
  - How can you adapt the coming week to avoid revisiting it?

- When you conduct your monthly review, write a recap of the month including highlights and low-points. Make this entry an historical look at your month. At the end of the year, you'll have a valuable resource of your thoughts and ideas around your life management.
- Write a few paragraphs about your most challenging goal for the year and how you're doing making headway toward achieving it. If it's not going well, write about how that is affecting you.
- Write a paragraph about what pissed you off today. Focus your writing on describing the people, events, or outcomes that led to this negative part of your day.

### **Power Users Make a Habit of Using Journal Writing as a Tool for Exploding Their Insight and Fueling Their Creativity**

Bullet Journal is an open, evolving life management system. It offers the user an unlimited array of mods and variations. But no tool can do everything. However, when it comes to life management, Bullet Journal is the tool that can help you the most.

Power Users of the Bullet Journal system understand that life management is a process that included self-exploration and documentation. Using your Bullet Journal as a tool for self-exploration is critical for managing the life you've created.

Frequently using the journal writing function of your Bullet Journal, over time, will help explode this level of insight and fuel creativity that needed no matter is you're a poet, a playwright, a warehouse worker, cashier, or accountant.

Creativity is like a high-performance engine. It needs the proper fuel in order to perform at its optimum level. I'm convinced that self-exploration is the key for fueling creativity.

## **Chapter 5 - Creating Mods That Work**

# for You – Taking Advantage of Bullet Journal’s Open System of Infinite Modification

**‘Mod’ is the standard short form for modification. Mods aren’t limited to Bullet Journal as almost any process, idea, or practice can be modified.**

Mod: An alteration to a system or process that increases functionality without changing the basic concepts of the process or system.

For example, in the fifth century B.C., the Chinese philosopher Mo Ti noted that a pinhole could form an inverted and focused image, when light passed through the hole and into a dark area. This was called a *camera obscura*.

[Ansel Adams](#), one of America’s most celebrated photographers on the 20th Century, used cameras that were not much more complicated than a *camera obscura*.

His cameras were obviously more advanced than a single pinhole, but not much more. They included mods for exposure control and image focus and they resulted in some of the world’s best known black and white landscapes.

Bullet Journal Power Users often create or incorporate mods that allow their notebook to become more personal and functional. [The Quarterly Planning Mod](#) is one such mod I came up with.

If a change increases functionality but changes the basic concepts inherent to the original system or process, it isn’t a mod.

## What’s Not a Mod

A painted portrait is certainly a work of art. It's a recreation of a person's face, head, and upper body as perceived by the painter. It isn't a mod of the model, instead it's a replication.

I often read accounts of other Bullet Journal users referring to their Midori Traveler's Notebook (MTN) set-up as a mod and still calling it a Bullet Journal. They believe they are still using the Bullet Journal concept but they really aren't. They've changed the basic concepts of the Bullet Journal and, hence, created a new system.

*To be more precise, the MTN isn't a Bullet Journal. It's the MTN system with mods influenced by Bullet Journal.*

### **When to Create a Mod**

Perhaps you've given the Bullet Journal a test-run and found that you're just not sure what to do with it. Maybe you feel that you need of some greater sense of structure in your Bullet Journal to really make it feel like it's for you.

Incorporating additional structure, increased functionality, more enjoyment, more personalization...these are all excellent reasons to create or locate a mod that you want to try.

Create a mod if you feel your Bullet Journal needs more structure but make certain that it gives you back something worthwhile. If you incorporate a habit tracker, use the information it yields.

Don't create one only to add pizzazz. After all, no one but you -most likely- is going to see inside your Bullet Journal.

### **The Secret to Successful Mods**

I've said this before, but it won't hurt to repeat it:

*Bullet Journal's beauty lies in its simplicity.*

If you've decided to create a mod for your Bullet Journal, my advice is to

stay with simple mods at first. Creating a complex structure/process that takes more than 15 minutes to create probably means it's not a good idea.

Check out [Pinterest's Bullet Journal Dashboard](#) for ideas you might want to incorporate into your Bullet Journal.

### **How to Determine Which Mods are Right for You**

After you've perused Pinterest, I encourage you to join some other social media groups that are hosted by and contributed to by Bullet Journal users. The following are two groups I belong to and I recommend you join and/or follow:

- [Google Plus Bullet Journal Community](#)
- [Facebook Bullet Journal Page](#)
- [Facebook's Bullet Journal Fan Site](#)
- [Bullet Journal – Tools & Equipment](#)

I'd also encourage you to watch some YouTube videos on the topic. [This link is to Ryder Carroll's original video](#). However, if you look to the right margin you'll find a whole collection of other videos uploaded by Bullet Journal, MTN, and other users that reference Bullet Journal.

### ***Exercise***

Get out your Bullet Journal and create a >>Journal Entry for Mods. Ask yourself the following questions and write about your responses. The questions should get you thinking in the right way about a potential mod to add and what you need from it.

- Is this mod true to the Bullet Journal systems or is it a new system?
- What benefits will I receive from incorporating this mod?
- What have others said is the reason they use it?
- How long will it take me to recreate this?



- How often will I need to recreate this and where?
- How can I use the data this mod yields to better manage my life?

### **The Mod Rule of Thumb**

After you've spent considerable time investigating potential mods -and there are tons on the social media sites- choose only those that fit your needs. Incorporate no more than 1-2 mods for the first few months.

Get to know your Bullet Journal and how it works best for you before you institute changes that risk your continued usage.

Some mods that look great in someone else's notebook might be totally wrong for you. For example, I love the idea of a habit tracker but I don't use one for two reasons: 1) I don't see it as a useful data collector for me, and 2) it would take me more time to recreate than I am willing to expend.

*Lazy? I don't think so. I'm 57 and I know what I do and don't do already.*

But that doesn't mean it isn't right for you. You might want additional insight into how you spend your time and especially how effective the time spent pursuing habitual activities are for you. If that's the case, go-for-it!

## **Actions Steps for Chapter 5**

- Begin perusing Pinterest and Google Plus as indicated above for ideas about potential mods
- Remain mindful about the creation and maintenance of potential for mods to detract from your Bullet Journal's main benefits
- Complete the journal exercise in your Bullet Journal as suggested above

- Limit your self to 1-2 mods for the first few months
- Check in during your Weekly Review and write about how the mod is working for you
- During your Monthly Review, decide whether or not it's a keeper of an experiment that should end
- Pat yourself on the back for experimenting and moving forward!

## Chapter 6 – Archiving Your Bullet Journals for Instant Access Even if You Throw Them Away – Options to Make Your Bullet Journal Searchable Online and Offline

**You might be like me: happy to use digital technology to image your Bullet Journal and then burn them.**

**You could also be unlike me: happy to store your Bullet Journals forever on a shelf.**

There are arguments for both options and they depend largely on your personal preference when it comes to how many things you want in your life. As a minimalist-leaning person, I choose the option of backing up my Bullet Journal online and actually burning the filled journals that are older than a year.

To some this is unthinkable. They've poured their heart's thoughtful energy into their notebooks and want them around forever. Even though most of them will never reopen used notebooks again, they can't part

with them.

### Book-Burning Minimalist or Crazy Cat Lady?

- Are you a book-burning minimalist content to literally blaze the Bullet Journal trail like Cortez burning his ships on the shore?
- Maybe you're the lady with 27 cats who can't see the harm of adopting another?
- Whichever camp within which you pitch your Bullet Journal tent (*wow, that's a lot of metaphors*), you're ultimately going to be faced with the question of storing your Bullet Journals.

Let's talk about the options...

**Why you'd want to archive your Bullet Journals.** Archiving your Bullet Journals, whether physically or digitally, is a good practice. There might be times when you would want to go back and read how you felt about a certain topic, confirm a date when you met someone, or review some critical notes from a business meeting.

History is written by framing the past from documented sources. It's also how families document their heritage. It's also how corrupt companies like Enron are brought down.

Whether you keep a personal journal, a business journal, or a combination of the two, what matters is being able to find the information you need, when you need it. That means the information in each of your notebooks needs to be searchable.

The Index in the front of your Bullet Journal is designed to record the major entry types contained in the notebook. It's also somewhat searchable.

It can become tedious to meticulously record every entry on the Index. My index contains references to calendars, future planning areas, monthly reviews, ideas, and other topics I feel need to be found later.

But the bottom line is that if you keep a detailed index, the information you want to find will be easier to locate.

## Two Search Scenarios

- Let's say that it's 2017 and you're sitting in a coffee shop in Seattle. You've traveled there from Santa Cruz, California to record a CD. In order to settle an internal dispute amongst band mates, you need to prove that your idea for a song originated a few years earlier. The loser has to buy dinner that night.

**Crazy Cat Lady Version:** You say that you'll have to wait until you get home in order to search through your carefully indexed Bullet Journals and locate the >>Journal Entry from 2015. Yeah, looks like you're buying dinner unless your incredibly cooperative band mates are civil and serious.

**Book-Burning Minimalist Version:** You pull out your iPhone 8 Plus and instantly search through your Evernote storage account that syncs to your 192GB iPhone. You type in the search tag, songwriting, and instantly you locate the photo of the page in question from your long-forgotten August 2015 notebook containing the lyrics of the first and second verses. Free dinner for you!

## Options for Digitally Archiving your Bullet Journals

### The Best Option – Evernote

[Evernote](#) is a company that provides cloud-based storage services that sync to your computer and other digital devices (Android and iOS). Because there is both a free and premium version, you can take advantage of Evernote's online storage, initially for free, and buy more as you need it.

Evernote also provides a fee app for Android and iPhone that captures photos and uploads them to a specified notebook wirelessly. That way you can take a photo of a two-page spread and save it forever in the cloud.

Making the snapshot searchable can be accomplished using a solid naming system for your notebooks within Evernote and assigning well-reasoned tagging names to each upload. You can also edit these using your computer or iPad/iPhone/Android device at a later time.

### **The Next Best – Dropbox**

[Dropbox](#) also offers free and premium options. Using either your Android or iPhone, a two-page spread can be photographed and automatically uploaded to the default Camera-Uploads folder on the Dropbox. By downloading the app onto your computer, you can sync this folder and have access to the photos locally or via your phone from anywhere.

Dropbox automatically assigns a numbered classification system to the uploaded photo. To make them searchable, you need to log into your computer or Dropbox app on your iPhone/Android and edit the name to reflect the naming system you've decided upon. Now all of your photos are searchable.

### **Other Cloud-Based Options**

[Google Drive](#), [Apple's iCloud](#), [Microsoft's One Drive](#), and [Box](#) round out the possible choices for uploading photos of your Bullet Journals.

### **Local Options**

You can also choose to buy an external hard drive or flash drive to store and recall your notebooks. I also have this option.

### **The Danger of Avoiding Digital Backups**

Some people will never take the time and choose one of the options above. Mainly because they get too busy and forget how easily a notebook can go missing, get stolen from a car, or left behind on an airplane.

*I once left an iPod on a Southwest plane. I never saw it again. It was my own damn fault but I learned valuable lesson -one that I've drilled into my youngest son as well: Perform an Idiot Check on everything.*

However, there are other dangers that will render your notebooks useless if you don't back them up digitally.

**Fire.** It does happen. I'm fortunate never to have had this happen to me, but I know several people who lost belongings in fires that were related to the carelessness of others. Fires damage is irreversible when it comes to paper.

**Flood.** Water damage can render even the sturdiest of hardbound notebooks unusable. They warp, they smell, and, if left unattended in a damp environment, they will mildew and grow mold. Yuck.

**Theft.** I've seen this a hundred times and so have you. Someone parks his or her car and either forgets to lock it or the thief smashes a window and lifts anything of value. Most likely a thief isn't going to call the number in the front of your notebook. Instead, they will trash it but not before looking through it to see if there are banking, credit card, or other financial information that might be useful. I don't keep this info in my Bullet Journal and neither should you.

**Loss.** Like my long, lost iPod if you lose your notebook, there is little chance you'll see it again. Even the best-intentioned people will look the other way and not be bothered. Some will do the right thing but I'm thinking the vast majority of folks won't. I could be wrong but I wouldn't bet money on it.

## Chapter 7 – The Power of the Pen: Choosing the Right Pen for Your Bullet Journal & Why It's More Important Than You Think

**Like the fine art of pairing a tasty dish with the perfect wine or a decadent dessert with the right coffee, so a pen should be aptly paired with both the user and the notebook.**

**Two Experiences That Changed My Life - and yes, they both have to do with pens.**

*It was in Mrs. Boggs' fourth grade class in Pasadena, Texas at the red-bricked complex known then as L.F. Smith Elementary School, that I first wrote with a ballpoint pen.*

*It was a surreal moment, not unlike an experience where your entire life fast-forwards across your consciousness in a flash. In that flash of a nanosecond, I knew beyond any doubt that I'd be involved in writing as a career.*

*The experience was almost giddy, as I'd stayed inside instead of going out to the playground. Mrs. Boggs allowed it because I told her I wanted to summarize the book I was reading, a children's biography of Francis Scott Key, the composer of The Star-Spangled Banner, a song that became the national anthem of the United States of America.*

*To be honest, I was only interested in writing with the ballpoint pen, something that wasn't allowed except when we were copying poetry. It was blue ink, most likely from a Bic Click pen. As the 30-minute recess passed outside, I was in, what I would later learn to be, a state of flow.*

Can you tell this was a milestone moment in my life? Here's another...

*Fast-forward to age 18 when I was living the town of Hexham, in*

*Northumberland in the northeastern portion of England. I'd traveled alone to this 600+ year-old town to live with a friend and his family.*

*Duncan, who is now an [event photographer](#) in near Derby in the Midlands, first made me aware of how crucial it is to always have a pen with me. I wasn't a writer at that time, but I was keeping a journal of my travels.*

*In the middle of lunch one day, Duncan asked to see my pen. I didn't have one on me. He looked at me and said, "Baz, you should always carry a pen. You should ready for anything."*

*Since that day in 1976, not a day has passed that I haven't have a pen on my person, at the ready.*

### **The Pairing of Pen and User**

**Focus on the experience.** As you can see from the two descriptions above, the experience you have while writing is the first consideration in choosing a pen to use for your Bullet Journal.

It isn't cost, but rather the experience you want each and every time you use it.

Whether your personal experience writing with a pen has been with a ballpoint, rollerballs, fountain pen, felt-tip, or gel ink, the experience of writing is what you remember.

You can tell from my detailed recollection above that the experience of writing is a powerful one. The experience leads to choosing the best pen for you and should include an evaluation of ink type, barrel feel, weight, storage ability, and cost.

**Ink Types.** Ballpoints, rollerballs, fountain pens, gel inks, and felt tips... all are possibilities.

*Ballpoints*, which use a thick, paste ink, are perhaps best known for their durability and low cost. However, in my experience the ballpoint pens



being massed produced these days are of poor quality and don't lead to an enjoyable writing experience.

*Rollerballs* use liquid ink that flows quickly out of the pen. At times, depending on the brand of pen, the ink can bleed through lower grade paper, but makes a nice, bold, fountain pen like line. I use to use these exclusively.

*Fountain pens* use a lot of ink and can become expensive to replace if they become damaged (I've dropped a few and they always seem to land on the nib), but the experience of using one is like no other. While not recommended for lefties due to the smearing of the ink, fountains pens, good ones anyway, can cost quite a bit.

*Gel pens* use medium viscosity ink that flows much more quickly, and write with much more fluidity than ballpoints. I love, love, love these and the Pilot G2 is my all time favorite gel ink. Gel ink takes a bit more time to dry and on glossier paper, like that in the Leuchtturm1917 notebook, can lead to smearing issues.

*Felt tips* are great and favored by artists. But be aware that they tend to wear out before they run out of ink, and write much like a fine tip marker – which many people find comfortable, and produce a brush like line. I seem to always leave more ink on my finger than on the paper when I use these. But in the right hands, they are tools of pure artistry.

**Barrel Feel.** Plastic, metal, textured rubber, resin composites.

The barrel is where your fingers grip and control the pen. Pen barrels are available in all of these materials. The important point about the barrel is how it feels between your thumb and your index finger.

Different materials will react differently with your skin, some promoting less friction and some loss of fine control (metal and some plastics), while others increase the friction between fingers and barrel resulting in finer control and less perspiration (textured rubber and

resin composites).

**Weight.** Most pens weigh next to nothing. However, more expensive writing instruments made by Mont Blanc, Waterman, Sheaffer, Parker, Pelikan, and Levenger's True Writer Chubster series, weigh considerably more. I like pens with a certain weight and I own several pens from the brands mentioned above. But for my Bullet Journal, I don't use any of them. I want the weight of my pen to be lighter. I always felt I was under a bit more pressure to write neater and with more meaning using one of these pens. Silly, I know...but it occurs.

**Storage.** Pockets, purses, briefcases, backpacks, messenger bags, journal bands, and neck chains. OK, I don't know anyone who'd actually wear a pen around their neck but I've seen them in SkyMall magazine.

The storage issue that needs to be evaluated in choosing your pen is the presence of a clip and how reliable it is. If you always place your pen inside your Bullet Journal and then both inside a backpack, purse or briefcase of some kind, then clip strength isn't much of an issue. In fact, pens designed for a woman's use often don't have a clip.

But if you often place a pen in your trouser pocket, as I do, clip strength becomes an issue. I've had many clips break off of G2 gel pens in my time. Further, if the clip is located on a removable cap, then the chances of the cap and pen becoming separated are increased.

**Cost.** I left cost until last because, in my opinion, it's the last thing you should consider. Usually a statement like that means that you should throw cost to the wind and spend, Spend, SPEND! But that's not what I mean. Pen buying might be a cool thing, but it's not King. When considering cost for a pen I use all day, everyday, I make my decision based on all of the above categories as well as the cost of replacement. If I lose or damage the pen, I want to be able to replace it quickly, expensively, no matter where I am.

## My Pen of Choice

After evaluating all of the above criteria, my pen of choice for daily use is the Pilot G2 Pro.

It uses gel ink, doesn't smear all that much, sports a textured rubber barrel that provides a nice feel, it light enough carry anywhere, but also carries enough weight that I know it's there.

The clip is reinforced and stronger than the regular G2 with the clear barrel and plastic grip. It's refillable and costs around \$5 to replace. I have three of these, one with a broken clip that I can't seem to get rid of. 🙄

### How to Audition a Pen

Experiment with pens at your local stationery store where there are likely loose pens stored in bins that you can easily try out. Office supply stores like Staples and Office Max here in the U.S. carry mainly packaged pens precluding you from trying them out.

Local stationers will usually provide sample pads of paper on which to audition their pens. But I advise you to take your notebook with you and make a few entries using the type and type of pen you like.

You really won't know how well a pen will perform until you use it everyday in a lot of different situations; Indoors, outdoors, with your Bullet Journal on your lap, on a desk or table, in a car or train, etc.

Your best option is to get a friend to lend you their pen. That way you can try it out for a day or two before you buy. This options leads to an informed purchase...the best kind to make at all times.

Pairing your Pen with Your Notebook's Paper

**Which came first, the pen or the notebook?** Ok, great! You've chosen your pen...or have you? Some us face a dilemma in whether to choose your pen or your notebook first.

I know, it sounds like a first-world problem, for certain. This lesson is

long enough, don't you think? I just thought I'd throw that in for laughs. 😊

Your pen-of-choice might not interact all with the paper in your notebook. [This happened to me](#) and I updated my notebook rather than change my pen.

Let's assume that you've chosen your pen and you want to pair it with the right notebook. Notebook is actually misleading; it's pairing with the right paper that's the issue. In the post I linked to in the paragraph above, I actually changed from an A5 Leuchtturm1917 hard bound notebook to a Moleskine soft-covered, large Cahieres Quadrilles notebook because of the increased smearing of my gel ink on the Leuchtturm.

Getting the right interaction between the ink types you prefer and the paper in your notebook is important. Experiment to get it right. You can't really audition a notebook in a stationery store, but you might be able to buy some loose sheets of letter stock that are similar and try out the pen and paper in this manner.

Don't be afraid to tell the stationer's clerks what your goal is. I've found employees in small, local shops to be much more helpful and knowledgeable than those working in Staples or another warehouse office supply store.

*They usually understand people like us because they are people like us. 😊*

## Actions Steps for Chapter 7

- Visit your local stationer
- Chat up the clerk and tell him/her about your auditioning a pen idea
- Bring your notebook with you or see if there is a sample available

to use; maybe a damaged one in the back – ask the clerk

- If you can afford it, buy several of your favorites and try them all to see which ones you like and will use
- Tweet out which pen you chose and use the *#BuJoActionStep* hashtag 🤖

## Chapter 8 - Manage More Than Your Time - Incorporating Life Management Into Your Bullet Journal

Managing your time is different than managing your life, though many combine both of these concepts into the same productivity category. But time really can't be managed whereas our lives can.

### Can You Really Manage Time?

Time is a temporal construct of humans. We use it to measure the progress of our lives. We can't possess it or capture it. We can only measure it.

My dog Buddy is totally unconcerned with time. His entire life is one present-moment experience punctuated by walks, feedings, and treats. When he scared off a prowler last week, it was simply a response to stimulus.

By contrast, I immediately lit up my social media accounts about what a good dog he was to protect my home; About how I was now super pissed off at the thought of someone entering my home and how this low-life would become personally acquainted with my 35 ounce Louisville

Slugger should he return.

For me, last week was something I can look back on and review what I accomplished and what I thought about by turning back the pages of my Bullet Journal. In it I record what happening in my life on a daily basis with my system of bullet notes as described in the [original video](#) by Ryder Carroll, creator of Bullet Journal.

### Looking at the Bigger Picture

I think that we tend to become distracted with by the concept of time management instead of focusing on managing our lives. When we confuse the two, we become slaves to the tedious systems created by others in the form of planners with pre-allocated pages and formats.

There are other examples of when we confuse the smaller picture with the bigger one. We focus, perhaps too much, on our jobs when it's more productive to focus on our careers. We focus on how we feel about our partner when we'd be better off working on our relationship.

Bullet Journal is a tool to help us manage our lives instead of our time. It's a tool that impacts not only our jobs, but helps us plan and adapt to our evolving careers.

*It might even save your marriage...OK, yeah that's a stretch but I'm sure someone somewhere is working on a mod for that.*

### The Fallacy of Form-Based Life Management

If it's one thing I couldn't stand when it came to annual reviews by my last employer, it was the forms they'd use that pre-allocated space for me to evaluate my progress. But it wasn't just their form, I've actually never met an evaluation form that I liked, and likely, you haven't either.

My performance goals often didn't match up with how they wanted to evaluate me. It was a slog to get through each of the eight years I worked there.

Similarly, time and life management systems that come with pre-formatted pages, list, fill-in-the-blanks, etc., limit you to what designers of the system feel is the best way to manage your life.

Your Bullet Journal is really the only life management tool you'll ever need. I've spent a small fortune taking courses, training seminars, workshops, and spent countless hours viewing DVDs and listening to audio courses with the goal of better managing my life.

Some of these were useful, but when I encountered the Bullet Journal system I immediately saw that it was far superior to any of the other pre-formatted forms, notebooks, and planners that I'd used manage my life.

## Incorporating Life Management Into Your Bullet Journal

### Life Management Areas (LMA)

Life Management involves managing all areas of your life, not just your appointments. For that reason, I use a mind mapping structure to explore areas I want to work on through the year.

Although this mind map evolves throughout the year and goals change, it gives me a starting point from which to map my progress.

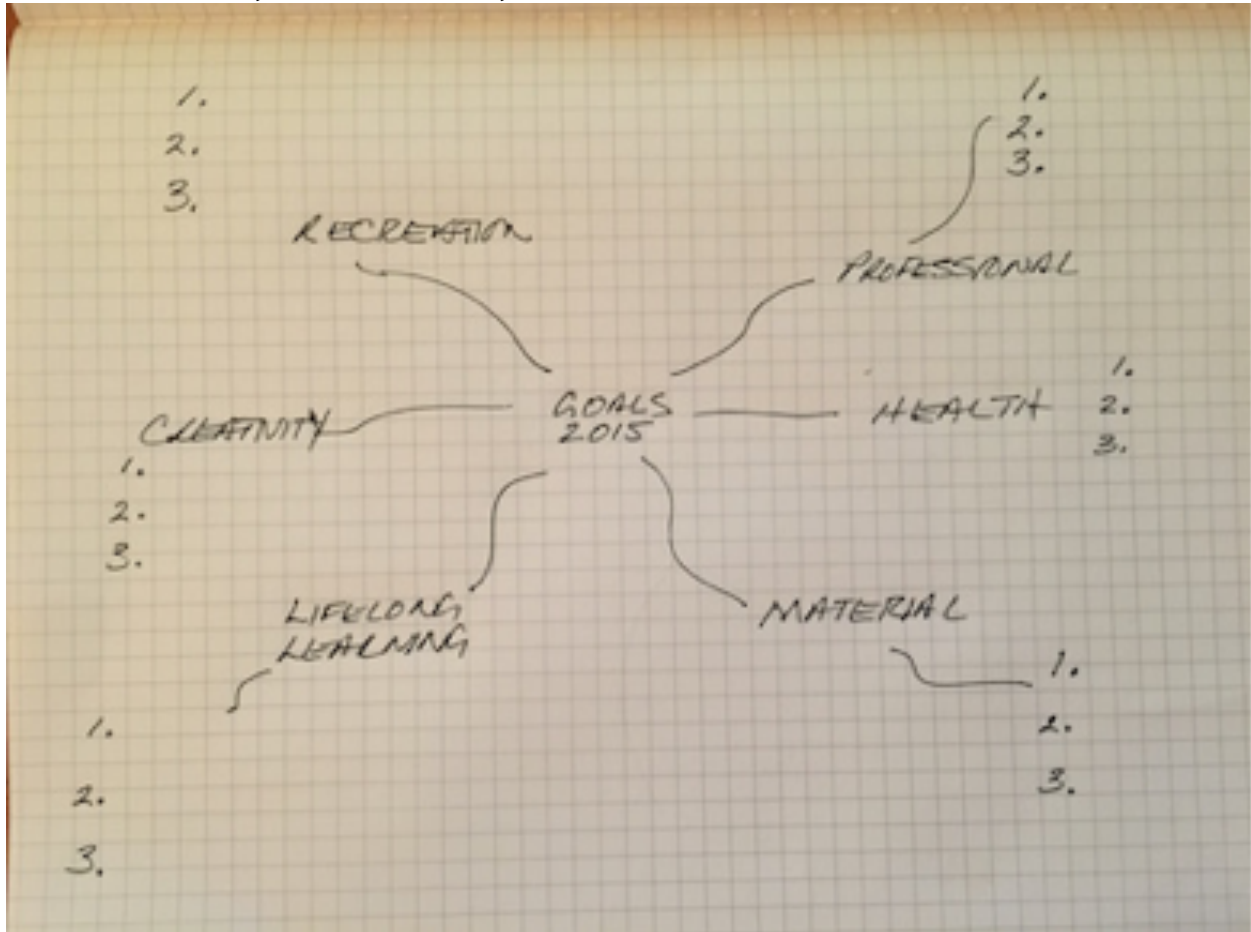
Goals. A few years ago I was introduced to this method of goal setting. It starts with the six LMA's as explained below:

- Recreation - fun, travel, adventure
- Health - fitness, nutrition
- Lifelong Learning - course work, training programs
- Creativity - writing, reading, art
- Materials - acquisitions, living space
- Professional - career, work
- \*\*Family - children, relationships

\*\*In my case, my youngest child is an adult and he spends more time

away from home than actually at home. This is the first year I've excluded 'Family' from my LMA's. Life evolves and so we must adapt.

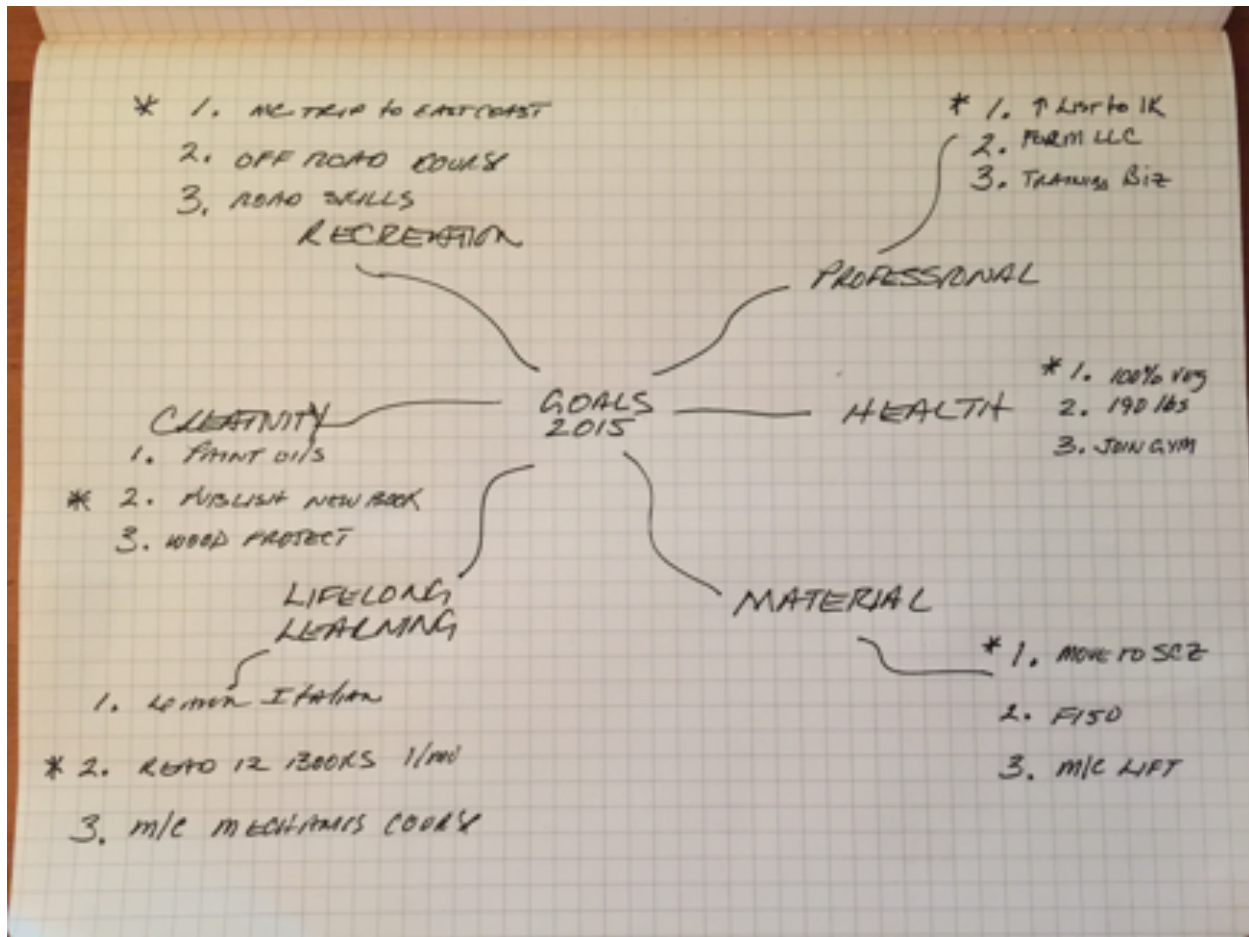
Here's the format I use inside my Bullet Journal. It's very basic, but I know some of you can make yours true works of art:



The numbered bullets are for listing three goals I set under each LMA.

Here's what it looks like filled in with an asterisk next to the goal that I'll focus my attention on initially.





I don't sweat the small stuff. There is a little bit of overlap at time between LMA's at times, but the bigger picture is what I want to accomplish in 2015 is before me and I can review it each month during my Monthly Reviews.

Coordinating Life Management with your Personal Mission Statement In [Lesson 2 – Three Powerful Bullet Journal Practices That Will Boost Your Personal Performance](#), I advised you to create a personal mission statement.

"The task of formulating a truly personal mission statement can profoundly affect your life and those around you. I recommend it to you as a starting point in your remaining journey."

If you haven't created a personal mission statement yet, I urge you to take the time and formulate a draft. Set aside some time today to ex-

plore the topic in a journal entry in your Bullet Journal.

During your Monthly Reviews, also introduced in Lesson 2, you can look over your LMA's, Goals, and Subgoals and see if they're still relevant. Remember that any document in your Bullet Journal is a living document. As you review your goals, if they no longer feel relevant, create a new one that does.

This is what life management is like. Your life is continually evolving and changing. There is no reason that your goals shouldn't evolve and change along with your life.

## Action Steps for Chapter 8

- If you haven't drafted a Personal Mission Statement, go back and read Lesson 2 and spend some quality time drafting what works for you - I can't recommend this strongly enough
- Begin to think about the Life Management Areas (LMA) that are relevant to you - get creative with new LMA's as they apply to your life
- I suggest you limit LMA's to six - give or take one
- Use your Monthly Reviews to look over your Personal Mission Statement and your progress toward your LMA goals - adapt as necessary

Thank you for staying with me through the entire eBook. I hope you found it useful and that you've gained some insight into how Bullet Journal can help you better management your life.

