

Week Two

Week Two

Welcome to Week 2 of the Blue Binder Project. Congratulations again, both for making the decision to improve your life and for taking action to turn that decision into a reality. If all has gone as planned, you are current with the work we talked through in Week 1 of the Blue Binder Project. My hope is that you are starting to feel more at ease and content with yourself. You are in the process of improving yourself, and that is something that you should feel very good about. You are also starting to think and do things a little differently, maybe stretching your comfort zone a little, and that is great!

You are also starting to pay attention a bit more to what's going on inside of yourself – specifically your thoughts and the reasons behind your emotions. You are writing down in your journal the things that have had meaning or significance to you during Week 1. At this point, the more that you can think about what's going on inside you, the better.

In Week 2, you will continue with the three exercises you began in Week 1. In addition, you will take a look at how you spend your time and what you enjoy doing. When you complete Week 2, these are pieces to the puzzle you need to move towards where you want to go.

Take your time with these exercises. If you rush or don't think them through, they're not going to be as beneficial to you as either one of us would hope. Break them down into bite-sized pieces, putting as much thought into each of them as you can. Be sincere, be honest, and be open with yourself about what you're writing. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers to these questions. There's just your answer, and that's the one you want to get out and write down. This needs to be about **you and what you want**, not what you think someone else wants you to say.

Congratulations for the action you are taking. It's not always easy, but you're moving in the direction of improving your enjoyment of life, and that is a huge accomplishment! If you have any questions or need additional help from us – don't hesitate to email us at info@bluebinderproject.com.





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Introduction
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Week 2

Letting Time Work for You

Thinking back over the past year, have you ever wished you had more hours in a day, or wondered ‘where did the time go’? Have you ever said to yourself ‘if I only had more time’? If you answered ‘yes’ to any of these questions, you are far from alone – most of us have thoughts along those lines from time to time.

As we continue our transition into this pause in everyday life, the newness of this way of living is wearing off, and we are starting to see this time as the way things are for right now. As this happens you get to either let your daily routines just happen as they will, or you can be more deliberate about how you want to use your time; to be more deliberate about how you choose to experience each day. This time awareness exercise will help you right now gain more control over your life during this pause. It will help you clear some of those cobwebs that form when we aren’t sure how or what to do. Even more importantly, learning this exercise now will pay huge dividends to you when, in the near future, you transition back into everyday life and realize that you have more time than you ever realized to spend on what you feel is most meaningful.

In this section, we are going to use an example to highlight the value of being aware of how you spend your time, we’ll take a look at a few days in today’s life to be aware of what we are currently doing with our time, and then you’re going to make deliberate decisions on how you want to experience each day moving forward though the rest of this Covid pause.

In the original Blue Binder Project curriculum, we share the following lesson to help jolt people from their everyday lives, to poke them out of an autopilot routine and into realizing the power of seeing each day as unique. But for us today, this ‘poke’ has already happened – Covid-19 has forced us out of our normal routines and, whether we like it or not, we now have the chance to make new decisions on how we spend today that isn’t governed by the routines we’ve had drilled into us through repetition. Even so, the following lesson is valuable as food for thought, both right now, and even more so when your ‘real life’ starts back up:

Everybody has 168 hours this week – seven days per week times 24 hours per day equals 168 hours per week. That’s it. You can’t buy any more, you can’t save it in a bank to use later. This week truly is the only opportunity that each of us has to use these 168 hours.

Since everyone, no matter where they are in their lives, has 168 hours this week, it is what you do with your time that can distinguish you from others. There is a tremendous value in truly knowing how you spend your time each day, not just in the abstract, but literally in looking at how many hours you spend on different aspects of your life. It may be a bit of a pain, and it may show you things that you pretended you didn’t know, but the results can be amazing.

Let me give you a personal example to illustrate this. I went through a similar exercise a while back. I

realized that I spent about one and a half hours driving to and from work each day (45 minutes there and 45 back). I didn't like doing it, but that's just the way it was. Then I added up what that hour and a half commute cost me in lost opportunity. Each week I spent 7 ½ hours in that commute. If I drove to and from work for 48 weeks a year, that meant I spent 360 hours, or 15 days, of my life in that commute each year. Then I realized I'd been making that drive for five years – that's 1,800 hours, or 75 days, of my life that I spent on that commute. That time is gone. I can't get it back. Without going through this exercise I might still be making that commute! Instead, I moved my family closer to where I work. I now have a ten-minute commute, and that extra time I spend with my family, or working on my business, or whatever else I choose to do. The point is that this exercise can give you information to make choices that can improve your life.

Keeping this lesson in your back pocket, we'll now look at the concept of being aware of how you are spending your time right now, during our 'pause' in real life. As an example, if you're now working from home and don't have to spend time getting to work, the question is, what are you doing with that additional time? Are you spending a lot more time sinking into social media or watching 10 episodes of Friends at a time, or are you doing something that makes you feel good about yourself?

Take this assignment head-on. I know you will because you want to make changes and enjoy more of life. Do this with honesty and with sincerity, and you will gain insight into how much time you spend on things that are important to you. You will also see how you could use time in different ways to take better advantage of the many opportunities in your life.

On the next page, you will see two Daily Time Logs.

1. Choose two days this week to keep track of what you do and how much time you spend on those things.
2. This is a 24-hour log, so start and end the log for each day at the same hour (for example, midnight to midnight, or 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.).
3. For each hour during that 24-hour day, you are going to write down what you spent your time on. There is a fine line between getting too much information and too little. I suggest that you break each hour in half and write down whatever you did the most during each half-hour.
4. Choose three times each day to update your Daily Time Log. To get the most out of this, don't wait until the end of the day to write down what you did! It can be difficult to look back at the end of the day and accurately record what you spent your time on. You won't remember everything, and you will fill in the blanks with assumptions. You don't want assumptions, you want facts.
5. After you've completed your second Daily Time Log, complete the Time Log Review Questions.



Daily Time Logs

Date: _____

| | Sleep | Childcare | Work | Socializing with Family and Friends | Other | Meals – Shopping, Cooking, etc. | Exercise | Household chores | Screen Time – TV, internet, Social Media |
|-----------|-------|-----------|------|-------------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------|----------|------------------|--|
| Morning | | | | | | | | | |
| Afternoon | | | | | | | | | |
| Evening | | | | | | | | | |

Total should = 24 hours.

Date: _____

| | Sleep | Childcare | Work | Socializing with Family and Friends | Other | Meals – Shopping, Cooking, etc. | Exercise | Household chores | Screen Time – TV, internet, Social Media |
|-----------|-------|-----------|------|-------------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------|----------|------------------|--|
| Morning | | | | | | | | | |
| Afternoon | | | | | | | | | |
| Evening | | | | | | | | | |

Total should = 24 hours.



Time Log Review

If you were to compare pre-Covid to now, what areas do you think have changed the most in how you spend your time each day?

Of these areas that have changed the most, which changes do you feel are positive (that add to your satisfaction of life) and which do you feel are negative (that detract from your satisfaction of life)?

How does the way you spend your time impact your life now?

How could your life be better if you changed how you spend your time?

What else did you learn about how you spend your time? What surprised you about what you learned?

Now that you know how you're currently spending your time, the next step is to choose what, if anything, you'd like to do differently with your time. The amazing thing about this exercise is that, as you create more "space" and time in your day for the things that are important to you, your Headspace Level will increase as well. Using the Headspace Level criteria from Week 1 (listed below) figure out where your headspace is at right now, and then choose the version of this exercise below that matches your Headspace Level. You can always come back and re-do this exercise later, as your Headspace Level improves and you are ready to do more.

Level One – I'm having a hard time right now seeing anything past my day-to-day existence and fear.

Level Two – I'm still having a hard time, but I have moments each day that I'm starting to feel lighter.

Level Three – I'm doing pretty well. I'm still adjusting to reality and still have a few times of negativity and fear, but I'm able to push through those and find myself again.

Level Four – I'm good. I've accepted the changes that have come into my life, and I know that, whatever happens, I'll get through this and come out the other side a better person.

If you are at Level One, set an alarm on your phone and get up at the same time each day, make your bed (remember that old saying "the state of your bed is the state of your head"?), and before you look at your phone, spend 15-30 minutes starting your day in a deliberate way with journaling, mindset reading and/or exercising. This is the start of a morning routine, and the way you start your day has a very real impact on how you experience the rest of that day. When you start your day in this way, by setting your intentions and thought patterns in a positive way, you build resilience for whatever comes up. Fill out your plan for tomorrow morning. You can also write in your journal how it made you feel and/or if you want to try something different the next day.

MORNING ROUTINE

Tomorrow I will get up at this time: _____

I'll spend my first 15-30 minutes doing:

Exercise (what kind?) _____

Or

Journaling _____

Or

Listening to Audiobook/podcast (which one?) _____

Or

Reading (what?) _____

If you are at Level Two, make an 'ideal schedule' for a day. Start your day the same way as Level One, and then add to it - in addition to your morning time block, create 4 more blocks of time, each about 15-20 minutes long, and spread these time blocks throughout your day to work on different aspects of your Blue Binder Project work, especially the exercise, gratitude, journaling, and mindset reading portions. Or use blocks to fit in time to move your body, listen to music, meditate, play with your kid or do something creative that fuels you and fills you with energy. There will be days where this ideal schedule just doesn't work – you've got a sick dog, or you're working on a deadline, or you just didn't get enough sleep the night before. That's ok, that is why it is an "ideal" schedule – it won't always work, and, the important piece is to go back to it again when that conflict has ended. What follows is an example to help you get started:

Covid-19 Ideal Schedule - Example

| | | |
|-------------|-----------------|--|
| 7AM-7:30 | Morning Routine | Wake at 7:00, Make bed, read mindset book |
| | | |
| 11 AM-11:20 | Exercise | Go for a walk & listen to audiobook, or jump on trampoline, or do a YouTube exercise "class" |
| | | |
| 2:00-2:15 | Mindfulness | Focus on gratitude, listen to music that makes me happy or practice guitar |
| | | |
| 4:30-5:00 | Family Fun | Play basketball with my kid, do a puzzle or color or do something else creative |
| | | |
| 8:00-8:20 | BBP work | Do exercises/homework, journal |

My Covid-19 Ideal Schedule -

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|--|--|--|
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If you are at Level Three or Level Four, now is the time to do all those things around the home that you want to do, but never seemed to have the time to do. Write out a list, first from what you can remember, and then walk around your house looking in drawers and closets, your garage, your yard and open your brain to ideas that inspire you or remind you of a ‘to do list’ item.

Divide your written list into two columns. Into the first column go all the things that you feel you should or “need” to do. In the second column go all the things that you want to do.

Then,

If you are at Level Three, jump right into the second column, those things that you want to do, and that you will have fun doing. Quite frankly, right now, you’ve earned it! Prioritize some time each day working on something from this list or schedule some time on the weekend. This will create energy for you, both because it’s something you like/want to do and give you a sense of accomplishment.



On the next pages, you will find a series of questions designed to help you start thinking more deliberately about what 'enjoying life' means to you. I am asking you to work through these questions for three reasons:

First, right now each of us can benefit from focusing our minds on joyful things for a little while, and spending time this way can only strengthen and improve your headspace.

Second, you're doing this exercise with an eye towards finding more joy in your life, not only right now, but also, and maybe especially, once we move back into real life again. By doing this inventory you establish an 'enjoying life baseline' for yourself. This is very important - you can't really improve something until you understand what you are trying to improve. Not knowing your starting point for life's enjoyment would be like an eye doctor giving you glasses without an eye exam or like a pilot landing a plane without knowing how high up he or she was. This self-evaluation gives you that starting point.

And, that leads to the third reason - life is all about choices. I'm sure you've heard that before, and it is worth thinking about. You make thousands of choices daily, some bigger than others. The choices you make turn into the results that you experience in life. When you take a close look at what is important to you, you start to develop a set of criteria to guide your choices in a way that is consistent with what is important to you.

As with everything else you have done and will do in Blue Binder Project, please answer these questions openly, honestly, and sincerely. Work on this over this entire week so you can give it your best effort. Some questions may be more difficult than others for you to work through and answer. The harder the questions are for you to answer, the more important it is for you to put the time and effort into getting your truth onto the paper. Remember, your truth isn't correct or incorrect, it's just your truth. This is for you and you alone; there are no judgments here. You're establishing your realities for yourself. For these questions, it doesn't matter *why* you are 'here'; we are just establishing where 'here' is.

Enjoying Life

1. What three activities have you done in the last six months that you really enjoy doing? When is the last time you did each activity?
 - a. _____

 - b. _____

 - c. _____

2. What three things have you done that are just plain fun to you? When is the last time you did each activity?
 - a. _____

 - b. _____

 - c. _____

3. Thinking back over the last ten years, what are three activities you used to really enjoy that weren't in your life a month or two ago? What excuse have you given yourself for not doing these more often? Fill in the blanks (hint: excuses are often associated with time, money, energy, etc.):
 - a. "I like going/doing _____ but haven't done as much of it as I wish I could because _____
 - b. "I like going/doing _____ but haven't done as much of it as I wish I could because _____
 - c. "I like going/doing _____ but haven't done as much of it as I wish I could because _____

4. When was the last time you laughed so hard you cried? What were you doing then? Who were you with?

5. What were the best four events of your life? When were they? What made each event the best?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

6. What did you do just for yourself today? _____

7. What was the last new thing you tried for fun? When? _____

8. What was the last new food you tried? When? _____

9. Think about the past five years, and with the benefit of hindsight:

a. What are three things you wish you had tried?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

b. What are three things you wish you had done more of?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

c. What are three things you wish you had done less of?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Once you've finished answering these questions, take a little break – ideally a day or more, before finishing the last part of this section.

Now that you've had a little time to think about the answers you wrote about your enjoyment of life, please write down your three biggest takeaways. What have you learned or remembered about yourself? These takeaways could be your observations, thoughts, concerns, or emotions – anything that you don't want to forget about. In other words, what are the top three things that you want to remember about enjoying your life, or that you want to remind yourself of six months from now?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Fast forward six months from now and answer these questions for yourself. Remember, these are your answers, not what you think your family or friends might want. For right now, for purposes of these questions, it is ok to be a selfish. You want to know what brings you joy! What helps you be excited about life? Once you know what you want, you can always decide later to modify what you actually choose to do, but don't limit yourself right now – get your truth out!

I have a few free evenings next week. Instead of simply doing more of what I usually do, I want a little extra joy, so I will do this instead:

I have a weekend coming up without any obligations. Instead of only doing more of what I usually do on the weekends, I want a little extra joy, so I will do this instead to give me a break from my routine and add joy to my life:

I have a week-long vacation coming up in a few months. Instead of compromising with others on what I am going to do, this time I get to choose - where am I going to go, and what am I going to do to bring excitement and joy to my life? What can I start looking up or researching now?

Journal

Date: _____

How do I feel today?

| |
|--|
| <i>Mentally</i> - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 + |
| <i>Physically</i> - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 + |
| <i>(circle one)</i> |

Thoughts of the day:

| |
|-------------------------|
| Exercise I did today... |
|-------------------------|

| |
|--------------------------------|
| What I'm grateful for today... |
|--------------------------------|

What am I looking forward to tomorrow?

Journal

Date: _____

How do I feel today?

| |
|--|
| <i>Mentally</i> - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 + |
| <i>Physically</i> - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 + |
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Thoughts of the day:

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|--------------------------------|

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Journal

Date: _____

How do I feel today?

Mentally - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 +

Physically - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 +

(circle one)

Thoughts of the day:

Exercise I did today...

What I'm grateful for today...

What am I looking forward to tomorrow?

Journal

Date: _____

How do I feel today?

Mentally - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 +

Physically - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 +

(circle one)

Thoughts of the day:

Exercise I did today...

What I'm grateful for today...

What am I looking forward to tomorrow?

Journal

Date: _____

How do I feel today?

Mentally - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 +

Physically - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 +

(circle one)

Thoughts of the day:

Exercise I did today...

What I'm grateful for today...

What am I looking forward to tomorrow?

Journal

Date: _____

How do I feel today?

| |
|--|
| <i>Mentally</i> - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 + |
| <i>Physically</i> - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 + |
| <i>(circle one)</i> |

Thoughts of the day:

| |
|-------------------------|
| Exercise I did today... |
|-------------------------|

| |
|--------------------------------|
| What I'm grateful for today... |
|--------------------------------|

What am I looking forward to tomorrow?



Week 1

Being of Service Reflections

| |
|-------------------------|
| Date: |
| Headspace Level: |

What did I do to cultivate my 'being of service' mentality?

My strategy to be of service over the next few days is:

What did I do to reward myself today?



Date:

Headspace Level:

What did I do to cultivate my 'being of service' mentality?

My strategy to be of service over the next few days is:

What did I do to reward myself today?



Date:

Headspace Level:

What did I do to cultivate my 'being of service' mentality?

My strategy to be of service over the next few days is:

What did I do to reward myself today?



Week 2 Summary

In general, how do you feel about this week? What were the highlights?

A month from now, what do you want to remember most about this week (perhaps a realization you had, or something you learned)?

Is there something you want to do differently or improve this next week?

Reading Reflections

How much have you read this week? Page: _____ through page: _____

What are the two most thought-provoking concepts from this week's reading? Why? _____

How can you implement these concepts in your life? _____
