Daily reflection routine

by Nick Beckstead

# Daily entries (template)

1. Date:
   1. What went well today/what am I grateful for?
   2. Where would I like to improve? What principles could I follow in the future in order to improve?
   3. What do I hope for in the future?
2. Date:
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   3. What do I hope for in the future?

# A detailed explanation of my process

1. Getting started
   1. Download the document “Daily Reflection.”
2. Step by step
   1. At the end of the work day or before going to sleep, open up “Daily Reflection.”
   2. Copy and paste the template for today’s entry.
   3. Fill in today’s date, e.g. 18 August 2013.
   4. Under “What went well today/what am I grateful for?”
      1. List things you feel good about doing recently or things you enjoyed today.
      2. List general things you have noticed lately and appreciate, even if they are not recent.
      3. (This is supposed to help you notice good things in life and seek out more of the good things.)
   5. Under “Where would I like to improve? What principles could I follow in the future in order to improve?”
      1. List any mistakes you think you made today.
      2. Try to think about principles you could follow to avoid similar mistakes in the future.
      3. If any of the principles seem useful or generally applicable, save them in another document, titled e.g. “My Principles.” I review my principles roughly monthly, and get reminders when I add new ones. I took this idea from [Ray Dalio](http://www.bwater.com/Uploads/FileManager/Principles/Bridgewater-Associates-Ray-Dalio-Principles.pdf).
      4. (This is supposed to help you learn from mistakes and identify, manage, and/or overcome personal weaknesses.)
   6. Under “What do I hope for in the future?”…
      1. List upcoming challenges and opportunities that you hope go well.
      2. List long-term priorities that you hope go well, especially ones you haven’t thought about lately or have been neglecting.
      3. (This is supposed to help you keep track of what you really want out of life in the short-term and the long-term.)
3. Other notes
   1. If it is inconvenient to make notes in this document and I’m not going to open up the document, I will sometimes do my daily reflection in my head.
   2. I generally list 2-5 things under each category per day.
   3. I find this complements well with tracking your time. If you do track your time, you can look at how you spent your day and think about what was productive and what was unproductive. This helps with identifying items for the first and second steps.

# Examples of daily entries (stripped of anything personal or embarrassing)

1. 9 August 2013
   1. What went well today/what am I grateful for?
      1. Got my post drafted
      2. Great talk with [friend]
      3. Enjoyed dinner
      4. Talking to [other friend] was useful
   2. Where would I like to improve? What principles could I follow in the future in order to improve?
      1. Spending too much on dinners
      2. Spending too much time criticizing people with dumb views
   3. What do I hope for in the future?
      1. Evaluate my projects well after they are done
      2. Use my framework for evaluating topics to work on
2. 13 August 2013
   1. What went well today/what am I grateful for?
      1. Really enjoyed the weekly review
      2. Glad I e-mailed a number of people to engage them on their perspectives
      3. Glad I came up with the idea that 80K say what it is going to change and be held accountable for making the changes
   2. Where would I like to improve? What principles could I follow in the future in order to improve?
      1. I spent too much time checking the LW blog in response to my stuff
      2. I’m not sure how useful it was for me to be involved with this prioritization institute stuff
      3. I didn’t do a good job filling out my time tracker
      4. Maybe [friend] is right that I didn’t do a good job as I think defending my common sense prior post
   3. What do I hope for in the future?
      1. Get my GCRI talk outline done
      2. Get to the point where I can do 10 pull-ups
      3. Review my common sense prior project
      4. Share my productivity procedures with others