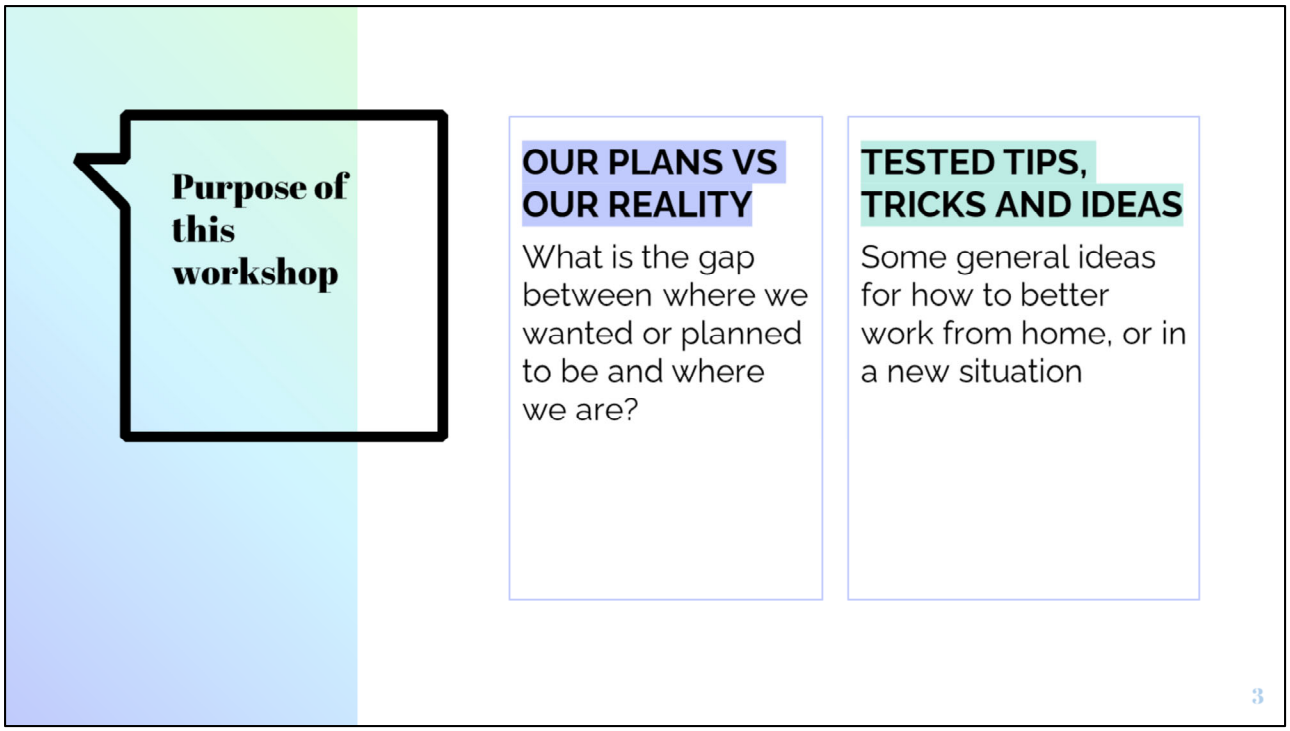
# Goal-setting and time management while working from home

# Hello!

**I'm Louise**

- Personal organiser
- PA to chemistry professor
- EA to property management team
- Correspondence secretary to Vice-Chancellor

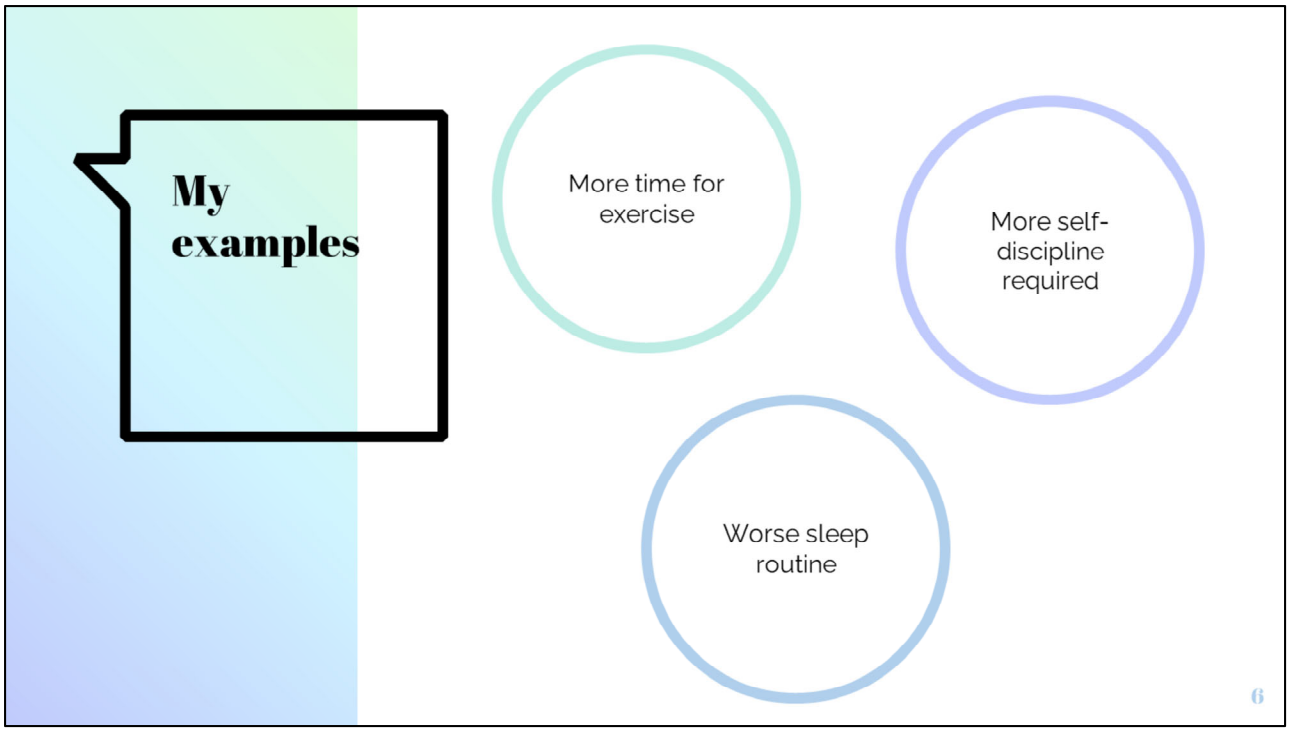



I compiled this with the help of many different resources and ideas from others in CARES that have helped researchers work from home.
Grab some paper and a pen or an empty word document as there will be a few exercises throughout the presentation and it will help to write things down.

> **You are not working from home. You're at home, during a crisis, trying to work.**

# Activity 1. Icebreaker

What's your name?
Have you enjoyed working from home or not (and why)?


My examples
More time for exercise
More self-discipline required
Worse sleep routine
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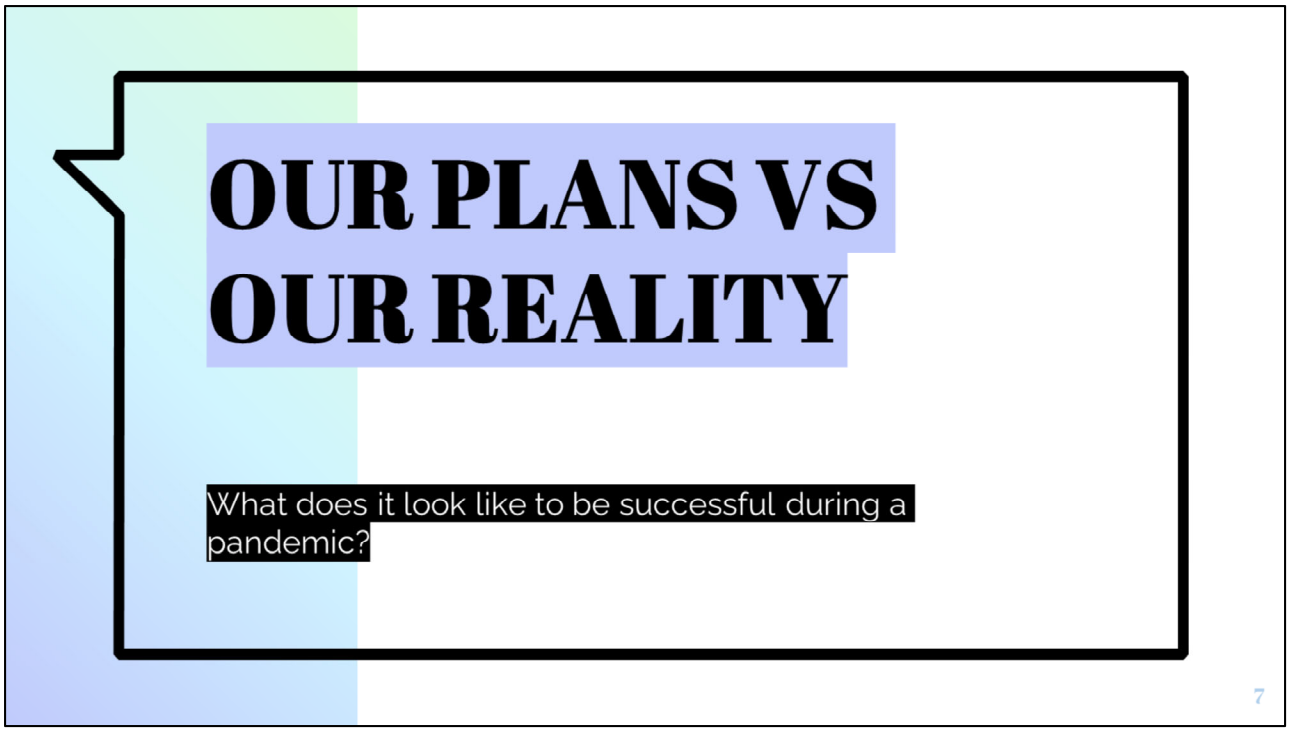
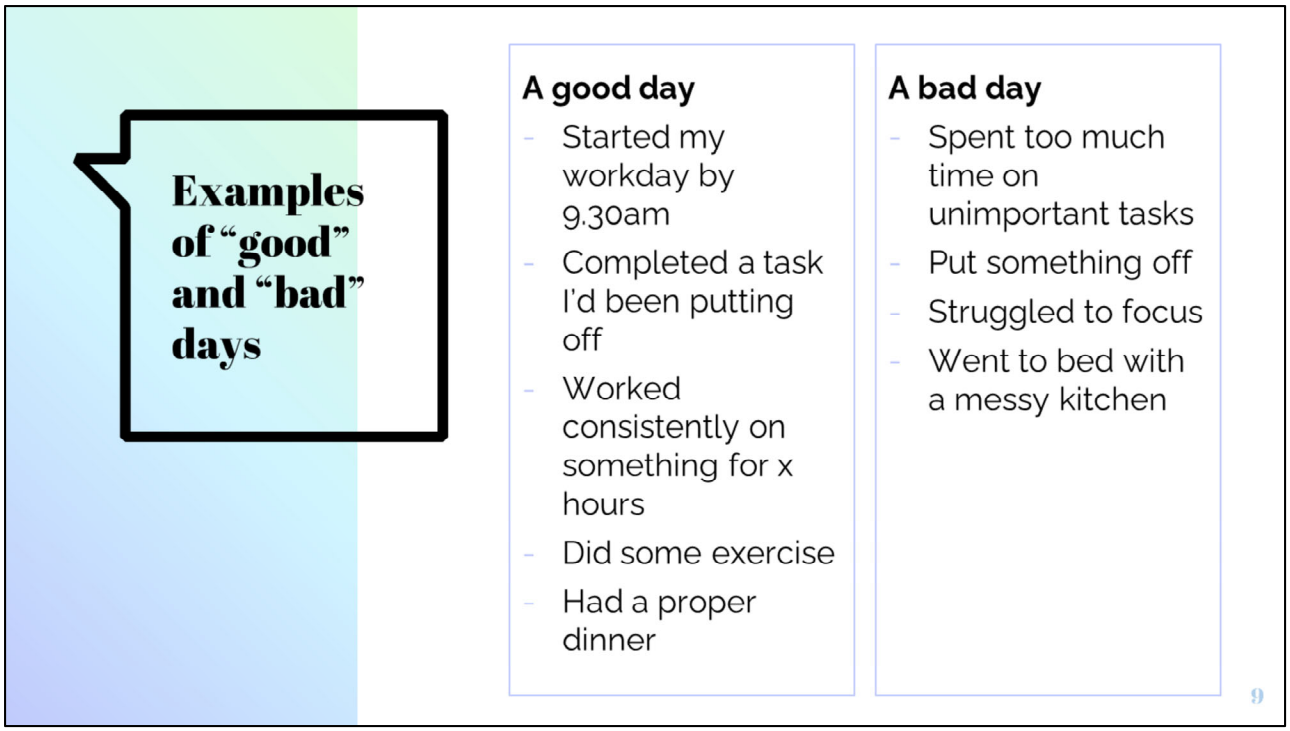
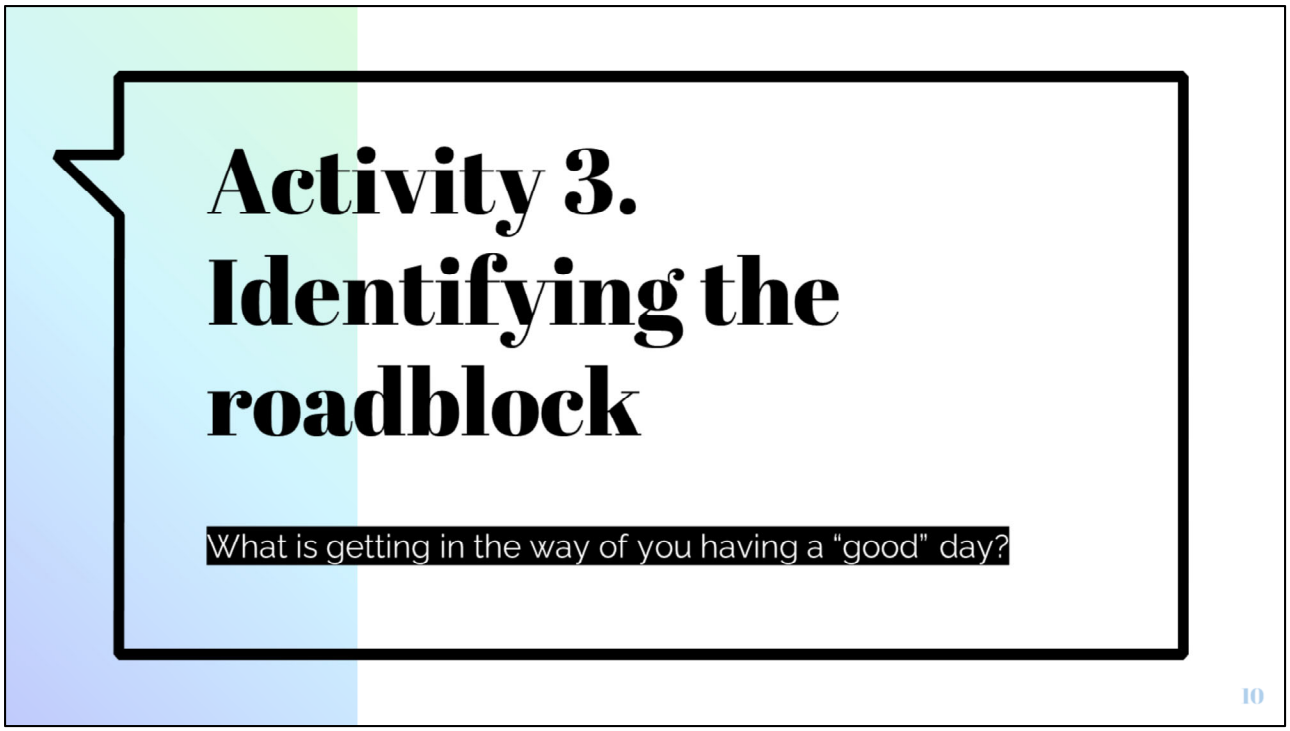



You probably had plans for 2020, expectations of yourself and expectations of what this year would look like. Considering the situation now, do your plans and expectations need readjusting? Does your idea of success need readjusting?

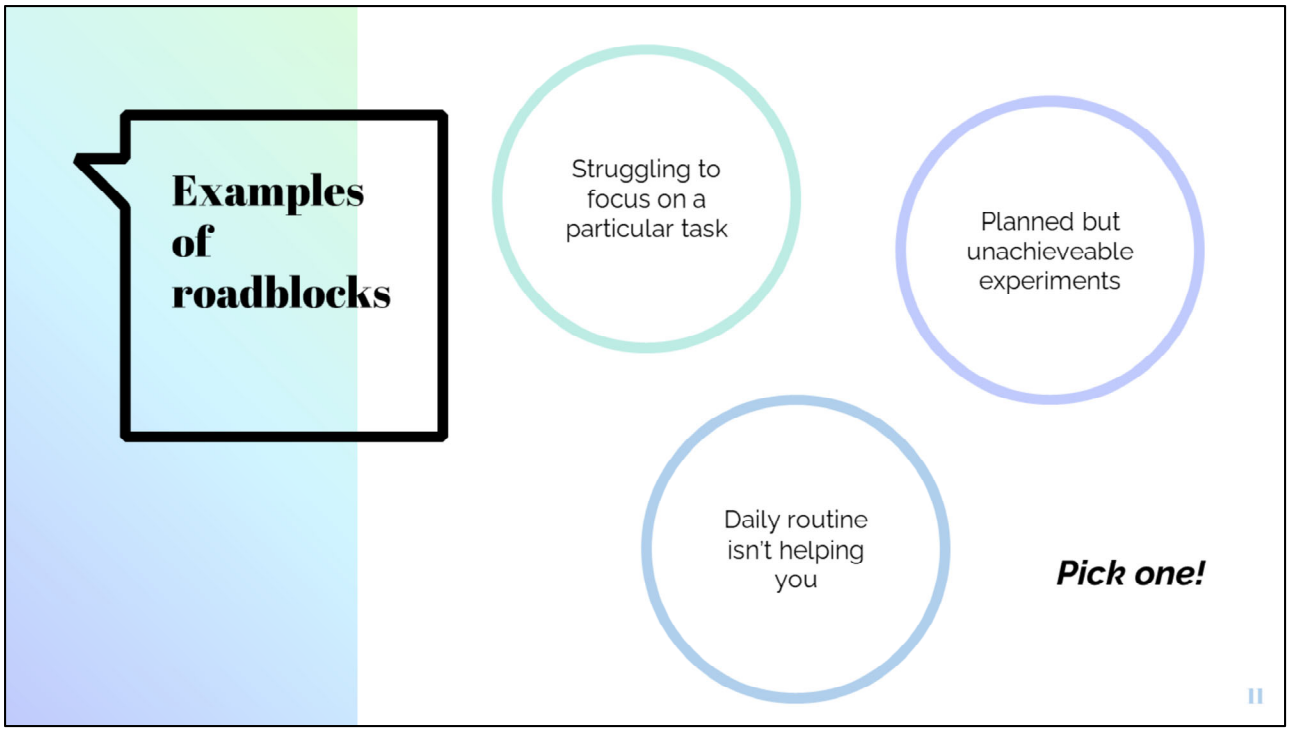
“Good” and “bad” aren’t very descriptive adjectives, but try to think about how you feel at the end of a workday. Having a “good” day doesn’t necessarily mean that you got everything done or worked long hours – maybe it means that you tackled just one difficult task, or had a productive meeting with someone. Your workday doesn’t have to be perfect to be “good”. There are some examples on the next slide.



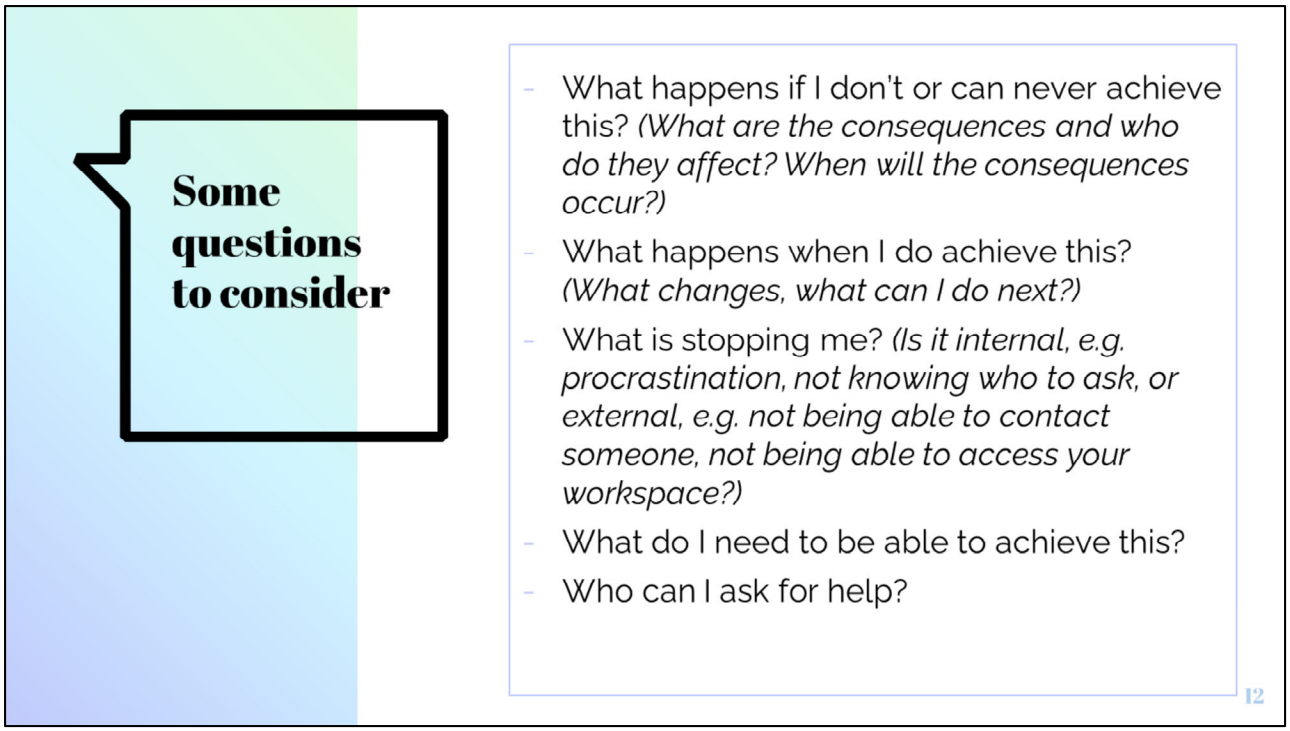

These are my examples of a "good" and "bad" day. Take some time to write bullet points for your own good and bad days. Think about what makes you feel a sense of achievement at the end of the day, or what has happened if you feel frustrated with yourself.




This exercise is to help you identify what's stopping you from doing the things on your "good day" list, or to find the gap between your expectation of yourself and what's really happening. There are some examples on the next slide.

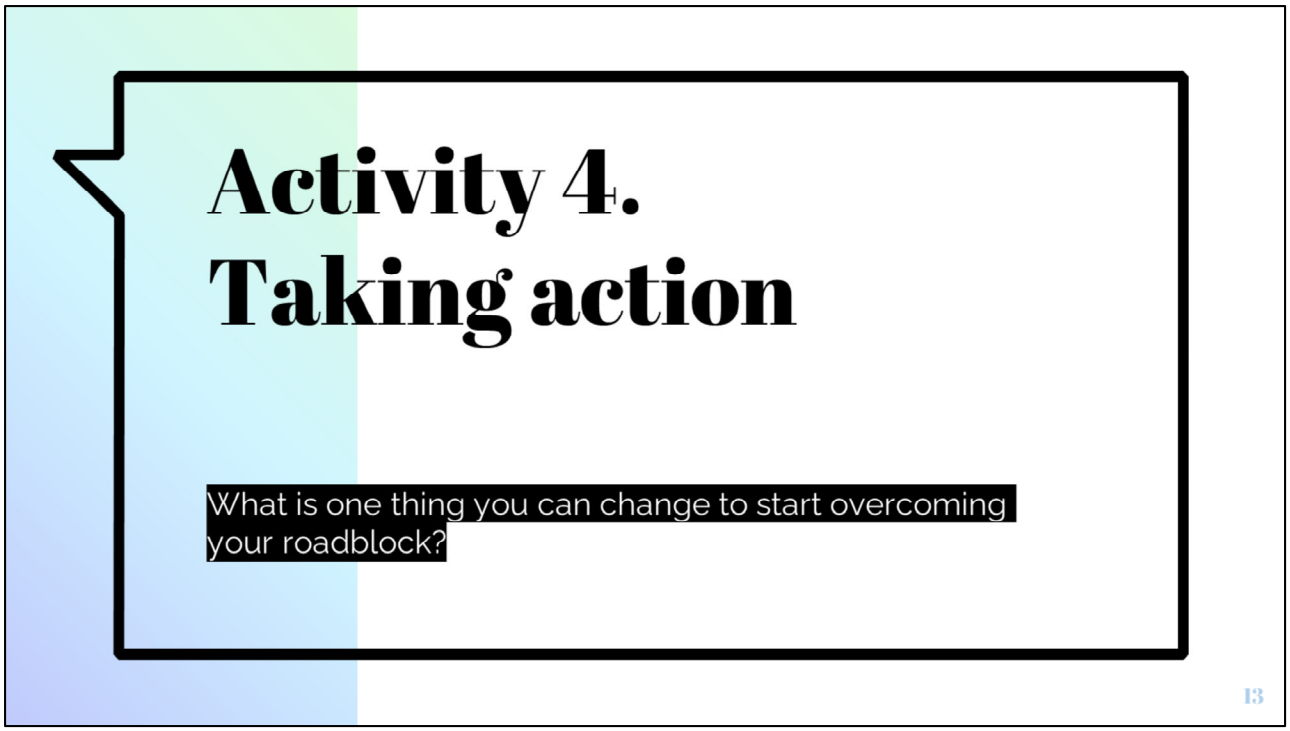



Write down some of your own roadblocks and then choose one to use in the next exercise.




Take your time and think through these questions carefully. Make some notes for each.

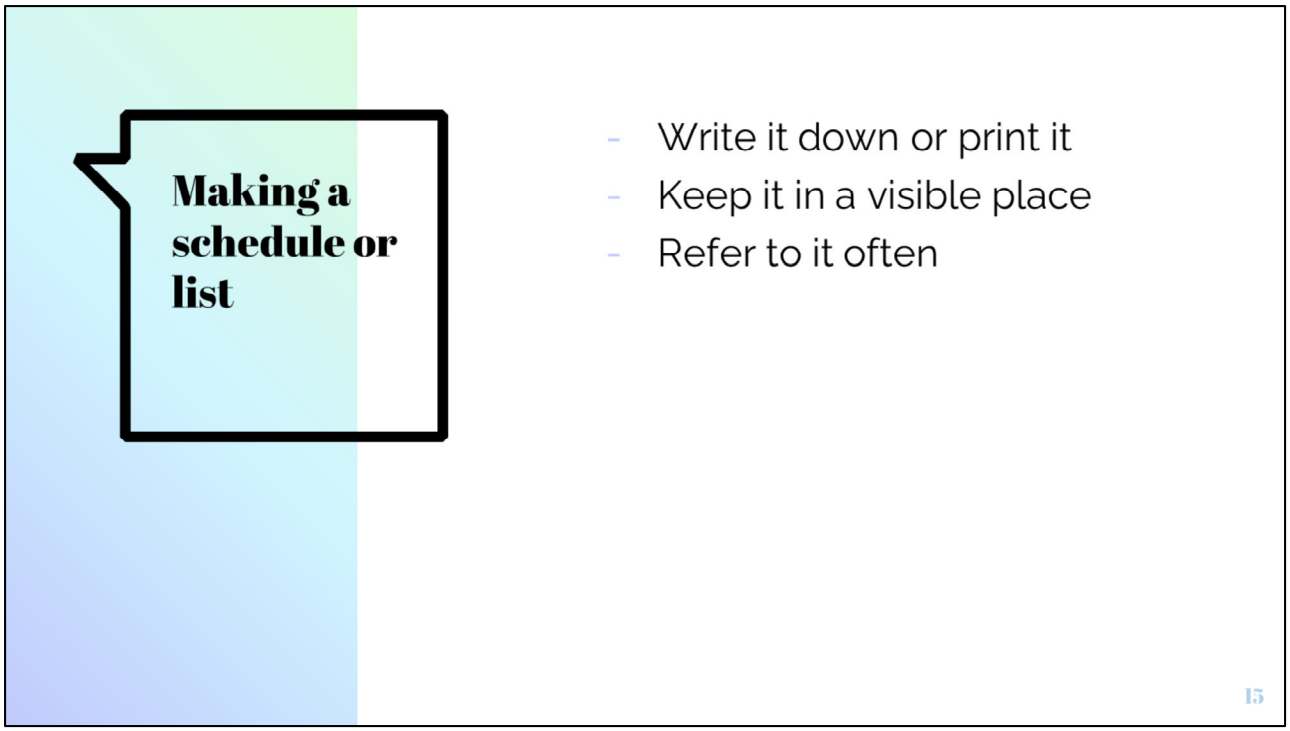
On consequences – sometimes the consequences of not meeting your self-expectation aren't that bad! Maybe this expectation is one you can let go of. Or, if you really do need to meet this expectation or achieve this task, go through the next few questions and see what you find out about what's getting in the way of this.




Taking your notes from the previous activity, write down one thing that you can do today to help yourself take the next step.

# TESTED TIPS, TRICKS AND IDEAS

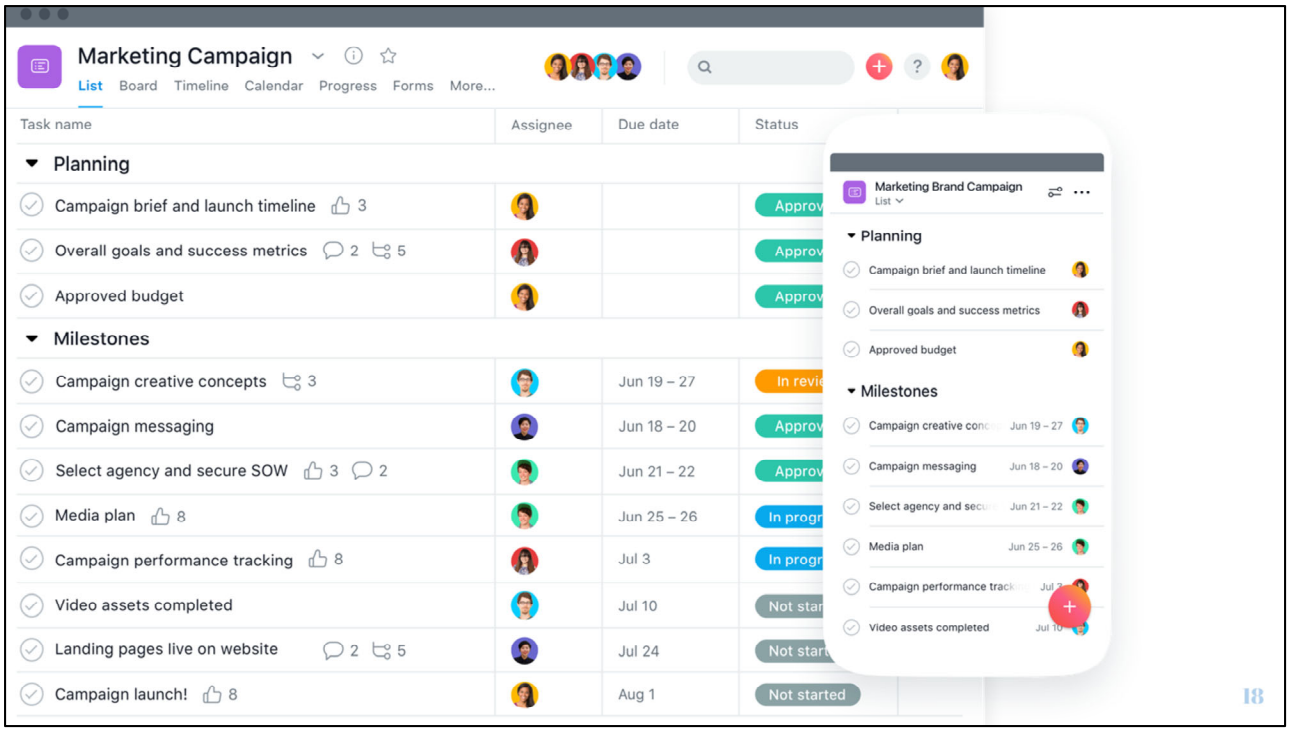
What are some practical things we can try?



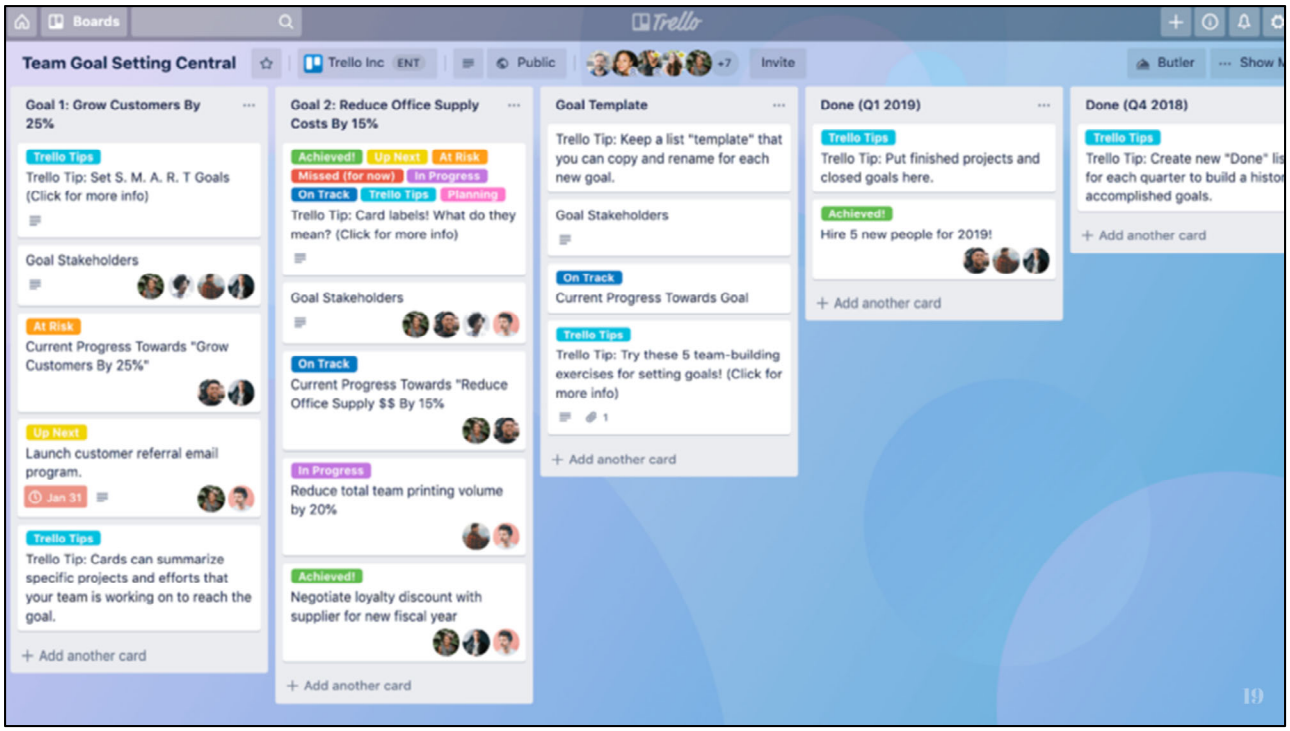

This is particularly good if you have a cluttered computer desktop and are likely to miss or not regularly check your tasks or emails. Also, don't rely on your emails as a to-do list – you'll miss things and this almost ensures that you won't be working on any of your own personal goals or tasks.

Here are some notepads I used to keep track of my tasks and goals while I was working from home in New Zealand. These worked well for me as I had a larger workspace. However, back in Singapore my desk is smaller so I use an online taskboard (Asana).

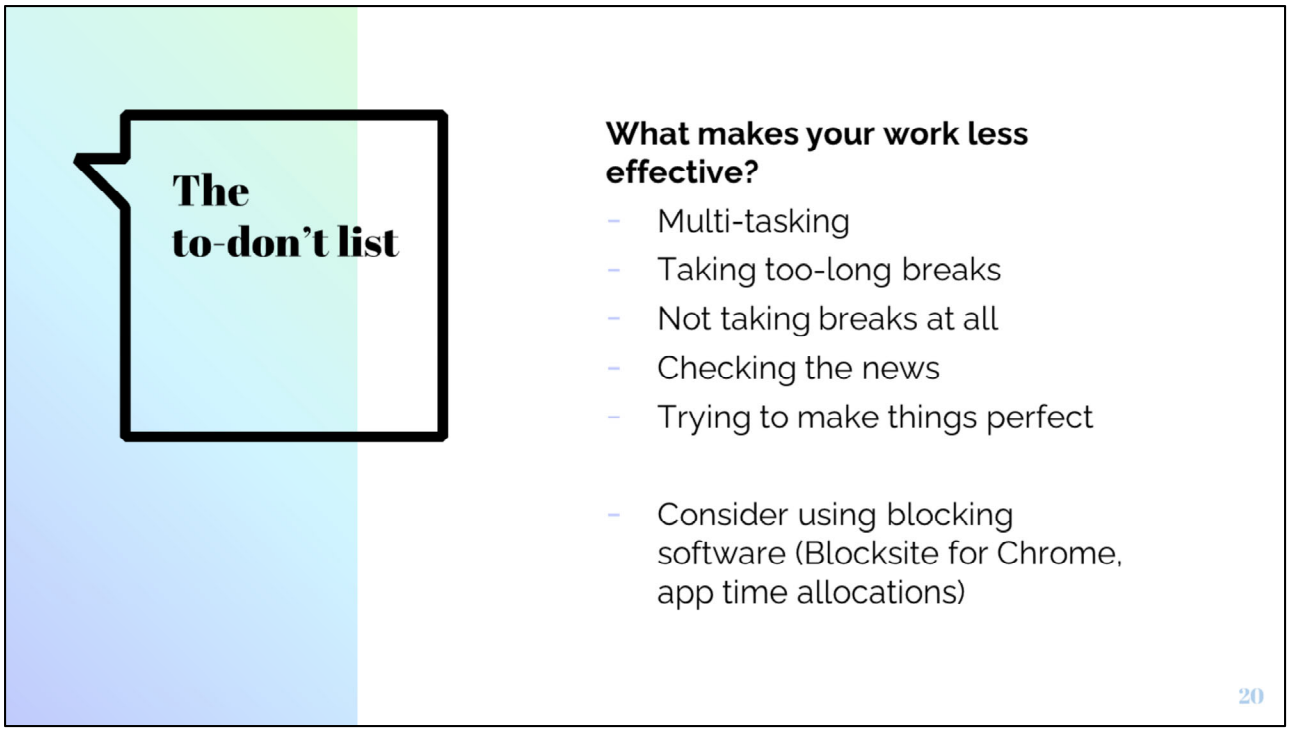
There are a couple of online options for project management and general to-do lists. Both have good free versions for personal use.



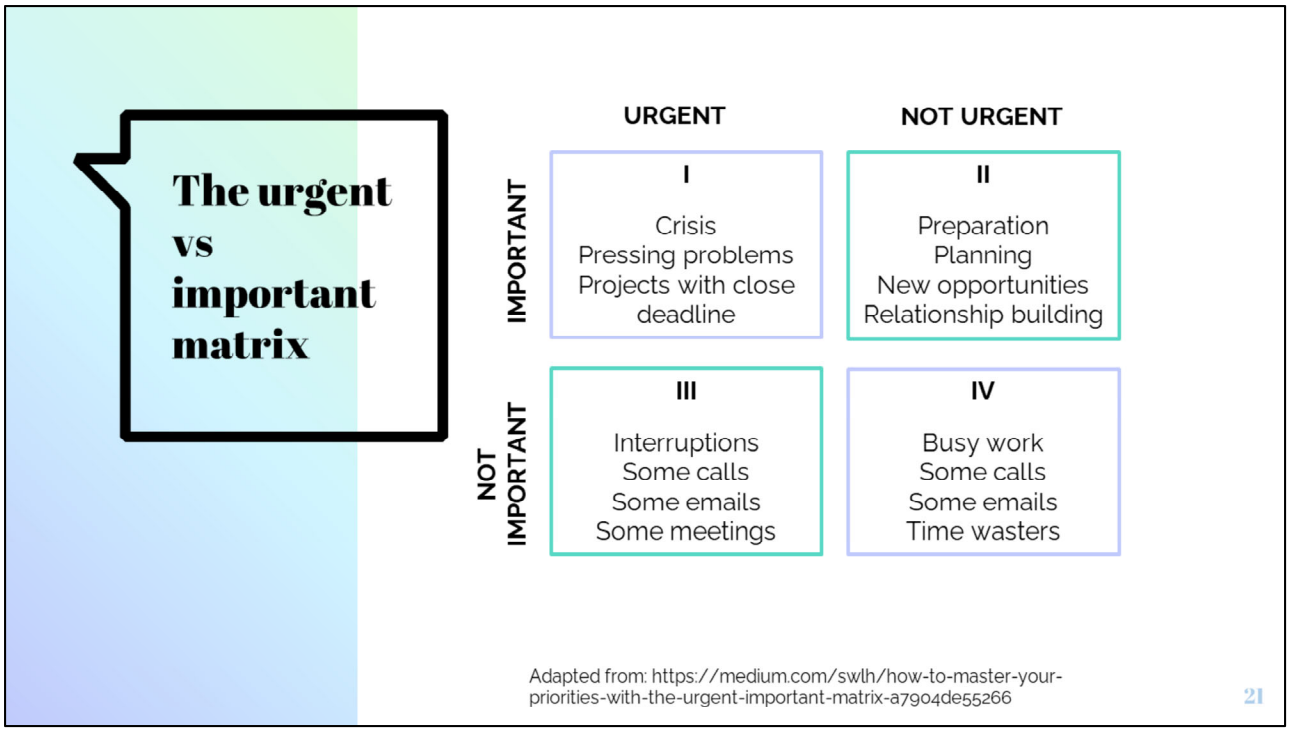

An example of an Asana project board




The Trello interface




This can be a helpful tool for identifying what is getting in the way of your progress. Don't do this every day – maybe just occasionally at the end of the week. Think about what makes you do these unhelpful things and how to reduce your time spent on them.




Researchers should be spending a lot of time in box II, but often end up in box III. When you're planning your week/day, schedule in time for boxes I and II first. There will be box III interruptions that you'll need to deal with, so leave time for these too. Try and eliminate box IV items as much as you can.

## Pomodoro technique

- Task-based
- Intervals of work separated by short breaks
- Usually 25 mins with a 5 min break
- After a few sessions of work (usually 4) take a longer break
- Ariga, Atsunori, and Alejandro Lleras. "Brief and rare mental "breaks" keep you focused: Deactivation and reactivation of task goals preempt vigilance decrements." *Cognition* 118.3 (2011): 439-443.

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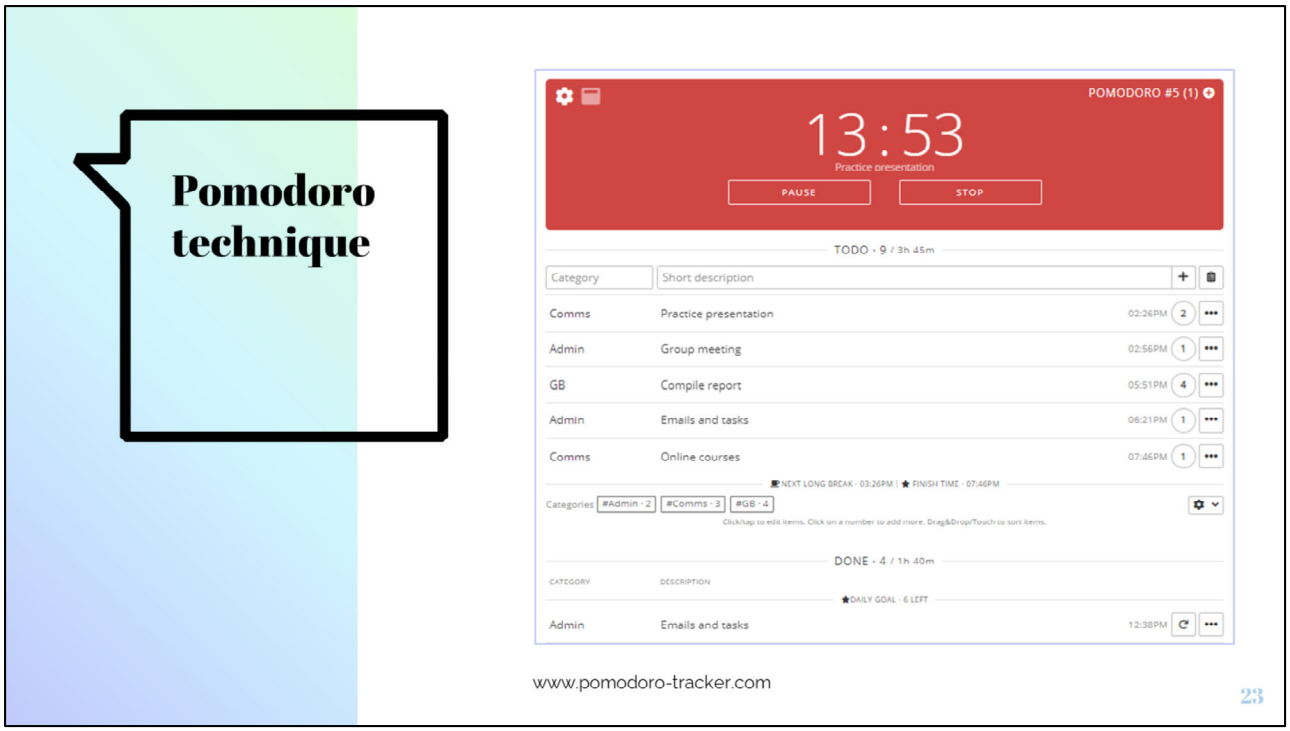
This is what I use and I find it really helpful.




This is what the Pomodoro Tracker looks like. You can create an account to track your time spent on various tasks and then analyse your statistics after a week/month/year to see what takes up most of your time.

**Active rest/recovery**

- Going for a walk
- Doing sports or exercise
- Doing an online course
- Baking/cooking
- Going out with friends

**Passive rest/recovery**

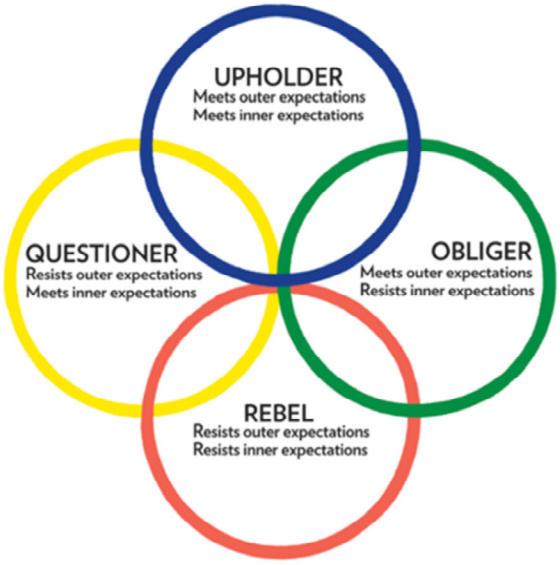
- Sleeping
- Watching Netflix

- What re-energises you?

**Find out your "tendency"**

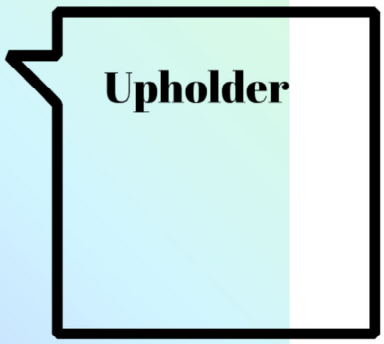
- How do you respond to expectations?
- Your response to inner and outer expectations determines how you respond to work tasks, deadlines etc.

**Find out your "tendency"**





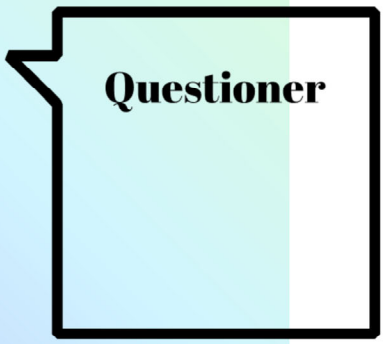

https://quiz.gretchenrubin.com/



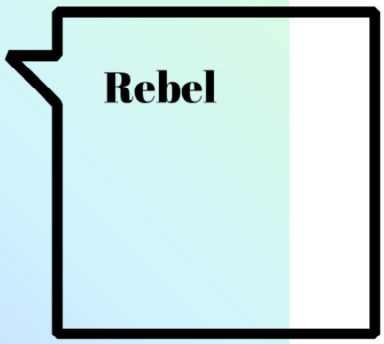

*Readily meets outer expectations but struggles to meet inner expectations. Upholders keep their New Year's resolution without much difficulty. They want to know what people expect from them, but their expectations for themselves are just as important.*

## Obliger

*Meets outer expectations but struggles to meet inner expectations. This is someone who knows he would be happier if he exercised but can't bring himself to do so regularly. He may have been an athlete in school and when he was on a team he never missed practice.*




*Investigates all expectations–both outer and inner. Questioners want to do what they think makes sense and resist anything they deem to be arbitrary or inefficient. They always want to do know why they should do something, so they make everything an inner expectation. If it meets their inner standard, they will follow through. If it fails their inner standard, they will resist.*




*Resists all expectations, outer and inner alike. They do what they want to do, in their own way, in their own time. Rebels don't like to be told what to do and even dislike telling themselves what to do. For instance, a Rebel would not sign up for a spin class on a Saturday because she doesn't know what she wants to do at 10:00 am on a Saturday.*

## Talking with others

- Talk with family, friends, colleagues
- Problem solve together
- Accountability

**Any questions?**

https://intranet.cares.cam.ac.uk/

- *Working From Home*
- *Resources*

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