

# Teen Mindset Upgrade: Techniques and Tips Quick Reference Guide

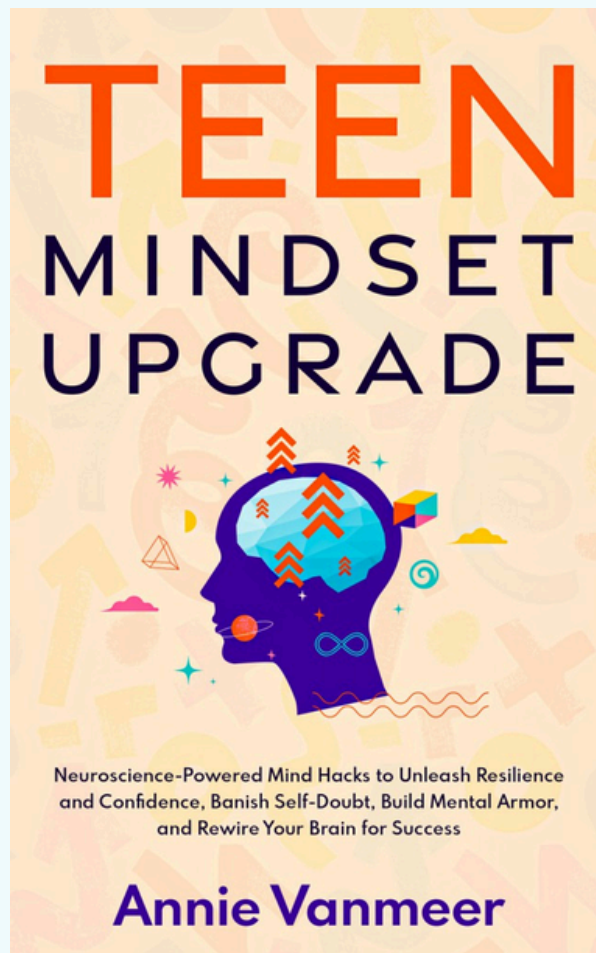


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# Introduction

This short eBook is a collection of the techniques covered in the book, Teen Mindset Upgrade. It's designed to use solely as a quick-reference guide or reminder. It's best to read the relevant chapter in the book first so you understand the reason for using the technique and how it benefits you.

If you don't already have a copy of the book, you can get it [on Amazon](#).



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# Chapter 1: Understanding the Teen Brain

In the book we've learned that neuroplasticity—your brain's ability to reorganize itself—peaks in your teen years. You have a golden opportunity to shape your brain's abilities and help yourself become smarter by experiencing new things, trying out creative activities, or building social connections.

So it's a good idea to regularly pick something new and perhaps even a bit challenging to do or learn. Try it out. If you're stuck for ideas, here are few for you:

- Learn to juggle
- Find out how to perform CPR
- Bake a cake or bread, or cook a dish using a new recipe you haven't tried yet
- Watch a video on YouTube on a topic you're curious about—maybe something from this chapter.
- Research some volunteer opportunities in your community, for instance your local animal shelter, working in a community garden, helping seniors with technology, and start one asap.
- Visit your local library, take out at least one book on a topic you don't know much about, and read a minimum of one chapter.
- Get a piece of string or thin rope and learn to tie some useful knots. Examples are a square knot (aka a reef knot), clove hitch, bowline, trucker's hitch. Knots are useful for camping, hiking, climbing, and many other activities.

When you are trying the new activity, know that even though you can't see your neuron connections, your brain will change because of your new experience.

## Important Tips to Help Your Brain

- Drink plain water regularly throughout the day to keep your brain well-hydrated so it can work at its best.
- Eat balanced and healthy meals and snacks to power your brain with the energy it needs.

# Chapter 2: Making Decisions with Your Teen Brain

When your brain goes into anxiety mode about a decision, it's like having too many apps running at once or too many open tabs in your browser. Everything slows down or freezes up. Stress hormones flood your system while your emotional center kicks into overdrive. These techniques can help.

## The Traffic Light System

Imagine that the decision-making part of your brain has a set of traffic lights: red, yellow, and green. Just like real traffic lights help control busy intersections to avoid traffic chaos, your mind-based traffic light system can help you manage the chaos and stress of tough decisions. Each of the three lights has a purpose to help with decision-making.

● **RED LIGHT: STOP** Feelings: High emotion, anxiety, heart racing. Your brain is in emergency mode. Here are three simple steps to help it get out of that state:

- Stop and take three deep, slow breaths.
- Name three things you can see right now, two things you can hear, and one thing you can touch.
- Remind yourself you don't have to decide immediately and take a couple more slow breaths.

The key is to recognize when you're in "red light" mode. Just like you would never run a red light when driving a vehicle, let alone drive at high speed through an intersection, don't rush a decision when your emotions are running high or you're feeling under pressure or super-anxious.

● **YELLOW LIGHT: CAUTION** Feelings: Calming down, breathing coming under control, starting to think more rationally and less emotionally. Now that you're out of the Red Light mode, you're in a better space to evaluate your situation.

- List your decision options and identify what you know for sure about each one.
- What questions do you need answers to before you decide? Get those answers.
- Tune into what your gut is telling you.
- Think about what advice you'd give a friend in the same situation.
- Consider potential consequences, both good and bad.
- Weigh up the positives and negatives.
- Consult a parent or another adult if it would make you more comfortable to decide.

This is your brain's "proceed with caution" mode. You're no longer in emergency response mode, but you're not quite ready to move forward yet. Take your time.

● **GREEN LIGHT: READY TO GO** After going through the Yellow Light steps, you're in Green Light mode and ready to move forward thoughtfully.

- With a clearer head, you can now pull everything together.
- Make your best choice based on your analysis in the Yellow Light phase.
- Trust that you can handle the outcome.
- Know you can always change it if you want to.

## The Risk Assessment Tool

When you're faced with a tough decision, running through a few practical checks helps to clear the mental fog so you can work out what your best decision would be. Here's a tool that's like a quick diagnostic scan for your choices. You can use it with the Traffic Light system.

### Safety/Risk Scale (1-10)

- Start by asking yourself some realistic questions about safety. Score each answer from 1 (safe/very low risk) to 10 (high risk).
- Could this hurt me or others, either physically or reputation?
- Are there potential legal consequences?
- Would this disappoint people I trust and care for?
- Are there any other risks for me?

This is about being smart. Taking a moment to rate the risk level helps you to put things into perspective. A low-stakes decision like whether to try for the lead in a school play or which new extracurricular to choose might rate a 1 or a 2, while choosing whether to let your friend drive you home after a party when they're a little drunk would definitely hit 10.

## Reality Check

Before you jump at something that seems awesome in the moment, pause first and think it through:

- What is the real “reward” that I would experience from doing this? Is it just feeling that I’m fitting in with my friends or is there a real benefit to me?
- Is this reward worth the risk?
- Will I still want this tomorrow? What about in 5 days or 5 weeks?
- Does this align with my goals and personal values?

Sometimes what feels hugely important right now might not matter so much when you consider your bigger picture goals, like making the team or maintaining your grades.

## The 5-5-5 Rule

This simple time-perspective trick can snap you out of panic mode. When facing a tricky decision, ask yourself:

- How will I feel about this in 5 hours?
- How about 5 days?
- What about 5 weeks?

You’ll probably find that the “now or never” pressure feels less intense. For example, saying no to a last-minute hangout might feel huge in the moment, but in 5 days? You’ll probably be glad you stuck to your study plans and you won’t even remember it in 5 weeks.

## The Phone-a-Friend Option

Getting perspective from someone you trust can be incredibly helpful. It’s a way of hitting the pause button to help you get out of Red Light mode into Yellow then Green. That’s what Sofia did in the story.

Think of it like adding another camera angle to your view of the situation—two cameras in different locations will see very different views of the same scene.

When you reach out, explain what’s happening and share what you’re thinking. Ask for their thoughts and listen to their perspective.

After that, make your own choice based on all the information you have and your own checks from the Risk Assessment Tool above. Getting other input doesn't mean you're asking them to make the decision for you. You're gathering more data for your own brain to work with.

## **The Pause Button**

If you can't think clearly in the moment, sometimes the bravest thing you can do is say that you need time before giving your answer. Having a few ready-to-use phrases can help:

- I need time to think about it.
- Give me a couple of hours.
- I'll let you know tomorrow.
- I'm not sure if I can—I'll check my schedule tonight.
- Give me until the morning (or end of the day.)

These aren't excuses. You're using a legitimate strategy for better decision-making. Even a five- or ten-minute pause can help your brain shift from emotional reaction Red Light mode to thoughtful analysis Yellow Light mode.



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# Technique Practice Page

(print extra copies of these pages to track different techniques)

**Technique:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Tried:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. What was happening at the time, and what decision did you need to make?

2. How did the technique work for you?



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3. Was it easy to use? Why or why not?

4. What did you learn from trying it out?

5. What might you do differently next time?



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# Chapter 3: Understanding Emotions and Relationships

This chapter focuses on managing your emotions and understanding others. Emotional intelligence (also known as EQ) means:

- understanding what emotions and feelings are and how they work
- recognizing them in yourself and others
- being able to work with them in a healthy way.

## Tips

- **Build Your Self-Awareness:** Keep a journal to spot patterns in your own emotional reactions and how you interact with other people. Pay attention to how you feel in different situations, and notice what triggers any strong emotional reactions in you. Talk to others to understand them by focusing on what they're saying rather than how you will respond.
- **Improve Your Self-Regulation:** When you're stressed, try taking deep breaths, pausing before reacting, and stepping away to focus on something else for a short while. Practice staying calm in stressful situations. Find out what healthy coping strategies work best for you. Also check out the mindfulness techniques in Chapter 10.
- **Grow Your Social Awareness:** To avoid misinterpreting emotions, pause before reacting and don't jump to conclusions. A good way to check if you're reading someone right is to simply ask them how they feel. Learn a bit about body language and observe how others behave in different situations.
- **Use the BUT Principle in Difficult Situations:** The "Big Underlying Truth" principle helps you remind yourself what really matters in any situation. For example, if you're upset with your best friend, you can ask yourself: what do I really want here? e.g. Do I really want to continue being mad with them? The Big Underlying Truth is that they are my BFF and I don't want to lose their friendship. We've got through other problems together. So whatever the reason, I'll forgive them.



- **Ask For Help Whenever You Need It:** Talk to a friend, family member, teacher, or counselor when you need help. Don't be afraid to do this, it's what humans do! Be clear about what you need from them, whether it's advice, to bounce around some ideas together, just listening, or a hug.

## **Ways to Grow Your Emotional Intelligence**

### **Observe Your Emotions**

- Look for patterns in your emotions, for example, are you always irritable if you skip a meal?
- Pay attention to how you feel in different situations and decide which "feeling words" best describe that. Learn as many words to describe your feelings as possible—don't settle for the basic ones, dig a little deeper to understand the feeling.
- Notice what triggers strong emotional reactions for you.
- Be patient with yourself—improvement takes time.

### **Keep a Journal**

Journalling helps you understand yourself better. You can use it to describe and process your emotions, and identify your stress and happiness triggers.

Track your emotions each day—write down each situation you encountered, the emotion or feeling you felt, and how you handled it.

- Use the different feeling words that you're learning.
- Look for patterns in your reactions and reflect on how your emotions affect your behavior.
- Write about both positive and challenging interactions.
- Note what worked and what didn't in different situations.
- Notice any changes in your emotional reactions over time—for instance, are some reactions reducing in intensity?

### **Have Open Conversations With Others**

- Focus on listening to and understanding others, not just thinking about what you're going to say.
- Be curious and ask open questions to learn more about others' perspectives.
- Share your own feelings honestly.
- Practice patience with yourself and others.

## More Tips

- See challenges as opportunities to grow rather than obstacles to be avoided. Remember that effort leads to improvement. Think about the last challenge you had—what did you learn from that about the activity you were doing and/or about yourself?
- If you get criticism, rather than taking it as a personal attack, pause and treat it as useful information to help you improve. Learn from it.
- Be patient with yourself. Changing your mindset takes time. Be kind to yourself if you notice your fixed mindset voice coming back at times and recognize that growth is ongoing. Celebrate when you use growth mindset thoughts.



# Chapter 4: The Mindset Upgrade (Growth Mindset)

This chapter explains how to upgrade your mindset. The techniques will help to stop your mind holding you back.

## Tackling the Fixed Mindset Voice

Think about an area in your life where you might have a fixed mindset. It could be a subject at school, a sport, a hobby, or even social situations.

Ask yourself:

- What thoughts do I have about my abilities in this area?
- How are these thoughts holding me back?
- How can I approach this with a growth mindset instead? What would I say differently to myself?
- What have I already learned from my efforts so far in this area?

Action: Write down a few fixed mindset thoughts you have and then rephrase each one using growth mindset language. Put your new phrases in your journal.

## More Tips

Here are some more tips to help you shift toward a growth mindset:

- Awareness is the first step to change. So it's important to recognize when you're having fixed mindset thoughts. Smile or laugh to yourself and say something like, "Oh, there I go again, being negative about myself!"
- Talk back with a growth mindset voice. Challenge your negative thoughts with hopeful ones. For example, you could replace "I can't do this" with "I'm just having trouble at the moment", or swap "I'll never understand this" with "I can learn this if I get some help and keep trying."
- See challenges as opportunities to grow rather than obstacles to be avoided. Remember that effort leads to improvement. Think about the last challenge you had—what did you learn from that about the activity you were doing and/or about yourself?



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# Chapter 5: Banishing Self-Doubt

Self-doubt can stop us trying new experiences, stress us out, and hold us back from being the best we can be. You can learn to overcome your doubts and succeed in spite of them. These techniques can help.

## **Name Your Self-Doubt Gremlin**

- A fun way to get your annoying inner voice under control is to think of it like a cartoon character or monster or similar. Give it a funny name. Then you can talk about it and to it. For example, "Oh, there goes the Grumpy Goblin again. Always looking for the negatives!" or "Thanks, but you can chill out now, Moaning Max. I've got this!"
- Try drawing a picture of your inner voice gremlin, or generate an image with AI

## **Write in Your Journal**

Writing in your journal or a notebook will help you get to know yourself better. Once you identify your patterns and triggers, you can take steps to handle them better.

Write about situations where you have felt self-doubt then analyze them. (If you prefer, use a voice recorder or draw some images instead.)

- Look for patterns. Is it a similar situation or activity that triggers your self-doubt most often? Maybe it's the same person or people around you each time? Are you extra self-critical after scrolling through particular feeds on social media?
- Do those situations really deserve your worry and mental energy, or can you let them go, like steam disappears into the air?
- Could you think about them differently so your self-doubt takes a back seat?





## Reality Checks and Reframing

Reframing means spotting your negative thoughts, questioning whether they're true, and giving them a verbal makeover. This can shift your whole mindset.

- Let's say that after getting a low grade in an algebra test, you catch yourself thinking, "Urgh, I'm terrible at math." Immediately stop yourself and question that belief, for example: "Hang on! Is this really true all the time? Have I done better than this in math?"
- Looking at the evidence might show you're being too hard on yourself. Try replacing "I'm terrible at math" with a more realistic statement, for example: "I'm getting better at math," or "I'm really good at trig and geometry, and I'm working on algebra."
- Change negative thoughts into positive or neutral ones. For example, instead of thinking "no one likes me," reframe it as "I'm working on getting to know a few more people".

## Affirmations

Saying affirmations regularly is a great tool against self-doubt. An affirmation is a positive personal statement you repeat to yourself. When people use affirmations, they often use several that address different positive beliefs about themselves that they want to reinforce in their minds. Proactive, positive self-talk will start to drown out your inner critic and, over time, it will become a standard part of how you think.

Affirmations are usually quite short statements like these:

- "I believe in myself."
- "I am a unique and precious individual."
- "I bounce back from challenges, stronger than ever."
- "I use mindfulness to find calm when I need to."
- "I love learning and learn something new every day."



Write down a few that you feel comfortable and say them to yourself (you can do it in front of the mirror) every day.

**Check out our coloring books with affirmations:**

**<https://www.amazon.com/Teen-Mindset-Success-Series/dp/B0FC2MVQ8N>**

## **Visualization**

You can use your amazing mind to help you. Create a detailed mental movie of yourself succeeding. Use all your senses: imagine images, action, sounds, scents, people. Visualizing activates the same brain pathways as actually doing the activity and is almost as effective. Play that movie in your head regularly. Imagine different versions of it too.



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# Supercharged Reframing Technique: CBT Worksheet

(print extra copies of these 3 pages to use the worksheet multiple times)

Use these 8 questions to explore your thoughts and emotions when facing a difficult situation.

Take your time with each question — write freely and honestly.

1. What is the situation I'm worried/upset/stressed about? Who, what, when, where?

2. How do I feel about it right now? (Name your main feelings and rate each 1–10.  
Example: anxious 9, frustrated 8, excited 3)



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3. What are the top thoughts I've got in my head about it?  
Which one is the "hot thought" that upsets or stresses me out the most?

4. What evidence supports my hot thought?

5. What evidence does **not** support my hot thought?  
What other perspectives are there?



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6. What are some alternative, balanced thoughts I can have about the situation?

7. How do I rate my feelings now (from question 1)?

8. Have I got any new feelings to add now, based on my more balanced thoughts?



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# Chapter 6: So You Want to Be Confident

The techniques in this chapter can help you build confidence.

## Dealing with Negative Experiences

- Remember that setbacks are normal and temporary. Everyone has them.
- Imagine brushing yourself off, as if you fell off your horse, skateboard, or bike and mentally get back on again.
- Learn from mistakes and keep on trying. Model yourself on the famous inventor Edison—when a journalist asked if he regretted doing so many experiments without results, he said, “I have gotten a lot of results. I have found several thousand things that won’t work.” His attitude was that he learned from each attempt he made. Of course, he kept trying and eventually one of his experiments was successful.
- Stick with people who give you helpful feedback rather than putting you down.
- Focus on what you can do better next time—that’s much more helpful and confidence-building than beating yourself up or dwelling on every little thing you did wrong. Turn your self-talk around. Catch a thought like, “Why did I make so many mistakes?” and change it to “What do I need to get right next time?”

## Try Gradual Exposure

Rather than avoiding certain situations because you lack confidence, take slow steps to face them instead. Start with less intimidating scenarios and gradually work up to more challenging ones.

Here are the steps to do this in practice:

- Start by imagining yourself being comfortable and at ease in a low-risk version of the situation. Write down how you feel and behave.
- Over the next 1-2 weeks, visualize yourself in different versions of the same type of situation. Do this regularly during that period.
- Then enlist a good friend's help to role-play another person in the same situation (very useful if it's a social situation). Do this a few times.

Then go for it. And bear in mind that being ready is not actually a feeling or a state of being; it's a decision you make to step forward!

### **Track Your Progress**

Keep a journal of your daily achievements, no matter how small. Writing them down shifts your focus from what you're uncomfortable with to what you've accomplished. If you like, create a "Success Log" with information about your achievements.

### **Celebrate Small Wins**

We often focus only on big goals and miss the smaller achievements along the way. Did you:

- Complete a tough homework assignment?
- Memorize lines for a performance?
- Ace a class quiz or finish a project?
- Learn a new song or instrumental piece?
- Try something new?
- Keep your room clean and tidy for a whole week?
- Take on a new responsibility?
- Do something kind at home, for a neighbor, or to help a classmate?

These types of wins are worth acknowledging and celebrating! Giving yourself credit for your wins keeps you motivated and happy, puts you in a good mood, and helps to build your confidence. What can YOU celebrate today?



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## Always Be Kind to Yourself

Have you noticed how harsh you can be with yourself compared to your friends? If your friend forgot their lines in the school play, you wouldn't tell them to quit acting forever. If they tripped during a game or scored really badly, you wouldn't tell them they're useless at that sport. Instead, you'd almost certainly commiserate with them and encourage them to keep trying. So give yourself the same kindness! Always!

Self-kindness helps to quiet negative self-talk in your head and keeps you motivated to keep trying whatever you set your mind to. When setbacks happen, look for the positives and remind yourself that everyone makes mistakes—that's how we all learn and grow.

**POWER TIP:** Create a go-to positive statement for yourself like "I'm doing my best" for times when you feel self-critical. (We'll talk more about affirmations like that one in Chapter 10.)

## Give Yourself Some Self-Care

Self-care activities help build your sense of self and your self-worth. Make time each day for things that make you feel good. That might be:

- reading or listening to a book
- taking a walk (the neuroscientist Dr. Tara Schwartz says even a short 10-minute walk is like a pampering session for your brain!)
- relaxing and listening to music
- playing your musical instrument (playing some favorite songs on the piano used to help me feel good when I was a teen)
- doing a relaxing hobby like coloring, drawing, painting, crafting
- relaxing in a warm bath or giving yourself a facial
- playing with your pet
- practicing some yoga.

What else would you add to that list?

## Practice Visualization

Use visualization to prepare for important moments. When you mentally rehearse any type of event, consider everything about it, including how you'll prepare beforehand, the physical movements you'll make and equipment you'll use, if any, and what happens afterwards.

- Find a quiet spot where no one will interrupt you.
- Get comfortable (sit or stand, whatever you prefer), relax your shoulders and jaw, and take several deep breaths. Feel your body relaxing and any tension easing away.
- Picture the situation where you want to succeed (like taking a test, acting on the stage, playing in a game).
- Include lots of details in your visualization, using all your senses:
  - What are you wearing?
  - What do your surroundings look like?
  - Who else is there?
  - What's in your hands, if anything?
  - What sounds do you hear?
  - How do you feel?

Practice visualization in the morning to set a positive mood for your day. And by the way, if you do a visualization at night before bed, your brain will continue working on it for you while you sleep!

**POWER TIP:** When visualizing, don't just focus on perfect scenarios—imagine how you'll overcome challenges too. Obstacles are part of everyone's normal life and preparing your mind to handle them builds up your confidence.



# Chapter 7: Resilience—Bouncing Back Stronger

This chapter provides techniques to help you bounce back from setbacks.

- **Have a Sleep Routine:** Teen bodies and brains need 8-10 hours of sleep every night. Aim for that.
- **Mindfulness:** Practice paying full attention to the present moment without judgment. Simple practices like deep breathing can reduce stress. See Chapter 10 for more ideas.
- **Relaxation Toolkit:** Create a personal toolkit of soothing activities to help you manage stress. This can include music playlists, a journal, or a guided meditation app.
- **Active Stress Relievers:** Use physical movement to de-stress. It helps to distract you from the stress, and the increased blood flow helps your brain to become more balanced.
- **Hands Tense-and-Release:** Ball your hands into fists, squeeze them tight, and then release them.
- **Shake Out Your Hands:** Hold your hands out or down by your sides, and shake them for at least 15 seconds.
- **Body Bounce-and-Shake:** Stand with your feet hip-width apart, bend your knees slightly, and bounce and shake your body for about 30 seconds.



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# Chapter 8: The Power of Habits and Routines

This chapter provides techniques for creating and changing habits.

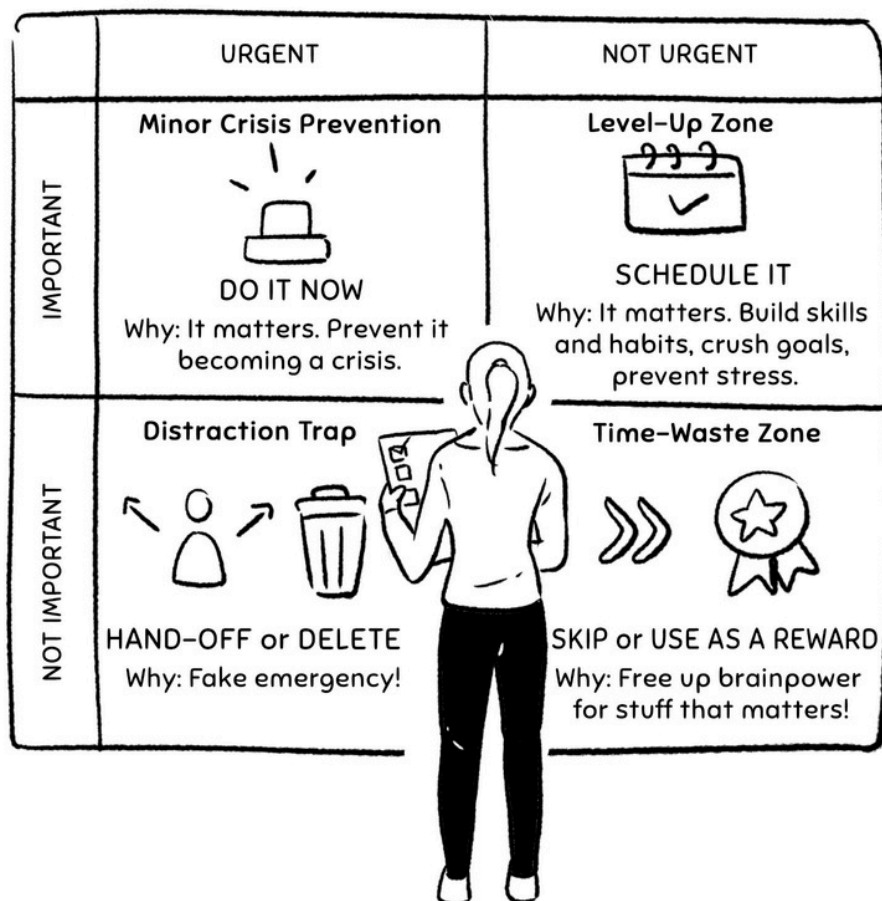
- **Observe Your Behavior:** Note your habits without judging yourself to figure out which ones to keep or change. Journaling can help you spot when you're likely to slip into unhelpful habits, and which habits are working well for you.
- **Replace Some Habits with Better Ones:** An example is, when you're stressed and want to scroll through social media, try going for a short walk or doing a relaxation exercise instead, or go outside and shoot hoops or a similar active pastime.
- **Stack New Habits:** Add a new habit before, after, or at the same time as an existing habit.
- **Have a Daily Routine:** When you feel in control of your day, it benefits your mental health big time. Having a predictable schedule and daily routines reduces stress and anxiety.
- **Have a Sleep Routine:** As a teenager, while your brain is still developing, it really helps to go to bed and wake up at the same times every day. Even at weekends, if possible. A regular wake and sleep timetable helps your body's biological clock work better, so it can keep your internal body systems at their most efficient.



# Chapter 9: Brain-Friendly Ways to Set Goals

This chapter focuses on setting and achieving goals.

- **Break Down Goals:** Break goals into small, manageable chunks and celebrate each one to get regular dopamine hits.
- **Eisenhower Matrix - Important vs Urgent:** Use the matrix to prioritize tasks as Important/Urgent, Important/Not Urgent, Not Important/Urgent, and Not Important/Not Urgent.



- **Chunk the Tasks:** Breaking down goals into smaller tasks reduces the "overwhelmed" feeling that leads to procrastination. Also, it gives you more things to celebrate as you achieve each task.
- **Look for Triggers:** Identify things in your personal environment that make you procrastinate, and change them. For example, put your phone out of sight while studying.
- **Temptation Bundling:** Pair something you need to do with something you want to do. For instance, you might want to hang out with your friend but you also need to get more exercise and fresh air. So why not exercise with your friend!
- **Positive Reinforcement:** Acknowledge and celebrate your progress along the way to boost motivation. Every step is a win, however small, and even if you stumble or make a mistake, you can celebrate what you learned from that.



# Chapter 10: The Power of Mindfulness

This chapter is dedicated to mindfulness techniques.

- **Focused Breathing:** Find a comfortable spot, close your eyes, and breathe deeply through your nose and out through your mouth, paying attention to the feeling of the air.
- **Box Breathing:** Imagine drawing a four-sided box to help with the rhythm of your breathing.
- **Five Finger Breathing:** Trace the outline of the fingers of one hand as you breathe in and out. Concentrate solely on the movement of your finger, the feel of it on your other hand, and your breath in and out.
- **Mantra Meditation:** Find a word, phrase, or sound that is meaningful to you and repeat it silently to yourself for at least five minutes, preferably longer.
- **Body Scan:** Lie down or sit comfortably, close your eyes, and slowly move your attention down your body from your head to your toes (or from your toes up to your head), noticing and releasing any tension in each body part. It also helps to deliberately tense then release each part in turn.
- **Mindful Listening:** Choose an audio track or just close your eyes, wherever you are (as long as you're somewhere safe), and pay close attention to all the sounds you can hear.
- **Mindful Eating:** When eating, use all your senses to fully experience the food, including the appearance, texture, aroma, and taste. Feel gratitude for the food and the opportunity to eat it.



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- **Morning and Bedtime Rituals:** Design short rituals to use to set a positive tone for your day, and/or before bed to help you wind down. Morning rituals can include affirmations, gentle exercise, or gratitude journaling. For bedtime you can include affirmations, a relaxation technique, or reflective journaling.
- **Simple Focused Meditation (using a mantra):** Pick a quiet time and place when you're unlikely to be disturbed. Sit upright in a comfortable chair or cross-legged on your bed or the floor. Take a few deep breaths to settle yourself. Close your eyes and begin repeating your mantra inside your head. If your mind drifts, gently re-focus on your breathing, and return to saying the mantra. When you think you've reached your desired finish time, gently open your eyes to check the clock. When you're ready to stop, take a few moments to gently become fully alert. Stretch your arms, your neck, your legs. (You might want to use a timer with the sound set to vibrate only, so it's not a jarring noise when it goes off.)
- **Visualize for Mindfulness:** Find a quiet spot and get comfortable. Breathe slowly and picture yourself somewhere peaceful where you'd like to relax. Maybe a beach, forest, mountains, lake, river, cozy cottage. Add other mental details like sounds, feelings, smells. You might like to listen to a nature audio track while you do this.
- **Coloring:** Find somewhere quiet and color in some pictures. If you don't have any coloring books right now, do a web search using a search phrase like "free coloring pages". You'll find all sorts that you can download. You can also add other keywords if you're looking for a certain type of picture, like animals, mandalas, flowers, trucks, etc.
- **Mindful Chores:** While doing the chore, breathe slowly and focus on nothing but the movements you're making, the feel of the items and tools you're working with, the smells, the sounds. You can do this with any repetitive tasks like washing dishes, cleaning the car, raking the leaves, stacking firewood, brushing your pet, etc.

