You're smart, but it does not seem like it anymore.

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Opening

> You were smart in high school, and suddenly you feel like you are not anymore.
> You have so much to study and you feel like you are just trying to stay afloat.
> You were the top of your class in high school, but now you're sinking in college.

High school was PE (physical education): unstructured, easy to do, seemed fun. College feels like a new sport: you need to use different skills and have to be disciplined. The problem is that for some of you, the difference between high school and college was unnoticed, and you proceed to things like you did in high school but at a higher level. College is not only a higher level but a **different level**.

As a college student, you are an intellectual athlete, and when you go on to study in graduate school or professional school, you become a professional intellectual athlete. Whatever lack of skills or structure you have will be **exposed**. In what is to come in this piece, you will get our approach to creating **structure** and **discipline**.

I firmly believe in creating consistency, so a lot of what I will ask you to do will seem like drudgery in the beginning, but in the long run, it will lead to delight. In the subsequent sections, you will learn my advice in two sections: macro and micro. The macro section will convey to you how I believe generally you should approach the lifestyle that you want to live while being an intellectual athlete. The micro section will provide insights on how to reach intellectual goals on a low level.

Macro

Our goal is to help you reach your goals by providing a game plan. We firmly believe that discipline is required to achieve all your goals.

Weekly Plan

I choose to work Monday through Saturday and take Sunday off as my Sabbath (my day of rest). This is fitting for me to do my weekly plan as my week starts on Monday. You should plan your week on the day before "your week starts."

Every sunday (or day you choose):
1. Write down all the categories of things that you want to do
    a. This will provide you with a high level understanding of the key areas of work in your life
2. For each category write down tasks in chunks that should last between 3-4 hours
3. Review the plan from last week and notice how much was completed and how you feel about what you completed
    a. This will provide you with a sense of what your capacity levels are and then over time you will be able to track your growth
    b. You will also be able to reflect on what factors leads to your task completion percentage

Daily Plan

The night before each work (related to your intellectual studies - paid or unpaid) day you will figure out what things on the weekly plan you want to accomplish. This is where the weekly plan comes in clutch because it allows you to know how much you should do in order to reach your weekly goals.

I think here is where I will allow flexibility due to your preferences. For some of you, you will prefer to work on one goal each day in order to limit **context switching** (multitasking) costs. This is particularly great for graduate or professional students since there is a lot of work to be done. For others, you will prefer to work on 2-3 tasks in a day. This is particularly helpful for undergraduate students because the weekly category goals can be easily accomplished in less than half a day's work.

Every night before a workday:
1. Pick 2-3 tasks that you want to accomplish from your weekly plan from the different categories you have
2. Order your tasks using some metric like the ones below:
    ○ Do what is cognitively harder first

- Do what is really urgent

Daily Schedule:
1. 3-4 hours of **undistracted work** session
2. 30 - 60 mins lunch, break, and nap if you'd like (actually take a break from the work, do not use technology during this time unless it's a phone call or video call with a friend or loved one)
3. 3-4 hours of undistracted work session
4. 30 mins break and snack
5. 1 - 2 hours of undistracted work session (use this session for the least cognitively demanding tasks if there are any: emails, small presentations, etc**)**

Micro

Setting apart a work-out schedule is pointless if you do not go to the gym and actually pick up some weights. Now that the structure is in place for you to organize what task you would like to accomplish, we turn our focus to efficiently and effectively completing the task.

In highschool PE, running plays from a playbook was not needed to be successful while in after school organized sports it was. Similarly, in high school, success does not require that much intentionality towards structure. On the other hand, in college, you need to equip yourself with a playbook to learn new material. In this next section, we will look at steps to take when studying for a new topic that will be tested on and studying a new topic for leisure.

Studying a complex topic for class:

Interact with the material 5-6 times before examination
1. Read the book
2. Watch/attend the lecture
3. Do practice problems
4. Watch or read extra videos to fill in knowledge gaps from lecture and readings
5. Study in groups / visit office hours with questions

6. Review

Studying a topic you want to apply to something:

Interact with the material 3-4 times before implementing

1. Find a list of resources
2. Review two or more resource types such as an article and a video
3. Apply the knowledge gained to a toy example (a small contrived example to test) or problem

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"Stay ready, so you don't have to get ready."

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Falling behind and trying to catch up may make accomplishing the above tasks more difficult. Being behind may cause anxiety, which can affect your productivity. At this next level, we are no longer only responsible for knowing what the teacher said but also for having the ability to infer and extend on the ideas presented in class. Two main ways are by **starting early** or **staying ahead** and having multiple interactions with the material.

 Athletes do not practice the plays one time and think they are ready for the game. They practice multiple times before the game to make adjustments and to understand what they need to do. Likewise, for you being ahead of the "game" allows you to make efficient and effective adjustments. For example, reviewing the book before class can put you in a position to ask better questions based on the gaps you discovered you had while reading.

Reading is fundamental (Complementary)

Reading is a skill, and like any other skill, it can be strengthened. Almost everything you want to learn can be found in a book. For those who are not avid readers, the idea that all the knowledge you want to get is held behind this literal literary wall may seem frustrating, but the good news is if approached correctly, this is a wall you can get over.

When reading new material, you should do multiple passes, and each pass serves a different purpose. The **first-pass** could include just reading the title and section headings. The first pass allows your mind to start building a skeleton of what you will learn without diving in too deep. The **second-pass** can be used to skim the text, not actually reading each word but looking for bold or italics and maybe intro and concluding statements in

sections. The **third pass** is for a full reading. Your mind has warmed up and stretched, and you are now absorbing the material and coming to terms with the author's words.

Ultimately, an increase in your reading skills is an increase in access to knowledge. You will be able to read faster. You will be able to read dense material in a structured way. You will experience life with more knowledge than you had before.

Here are some starting topics to start your reading journey:
- Personal Finance and Wealth
- Technical Topics written for a general audience
  - Introduction to the history of Haiti
  - Introduction to biology for the average person
  - Introduction to computer science for the average person
  - Etc ...
- Professional Development Topics
  - How to structure your workday?
  - Public Speaking
  - Writing Effectively
  - Etc.

Read what you are interested in. If it's a new area for you, there will be a lot of nomenclatures that you have to get used to but after a few books, you will become comfortable with reading and thinking about new areas. This will be of tremendous value to you because over time you will have accumulated a lot of knowledge and be poised to solve problems at a new level.

Closing

We discussed many parts of succeeding in life after high school, specifically for those who choose to pursue academics by going to college and possibly getting advanced degrees. We provide what we believe will make you successful in your work by providing macro structure, micro structure, and encouragement to read. Some of the ideas from *Deep Work* by Cal Newport and *How to Read a Paper* by Srinivasan Keshav contributed to some of our methods. All glory to Jesus Christ for allowing us to reach points we have in our lives.