

Grab Your Tools

For many years, I've been curating tools for my personal use. The ones compiled in this book represent those I've found most effective, and I hope that you will experiment by applying them to your life and optimizing whatever areas you feel can be improved. Beyond providing you with individual techniques and concepts that you find useful, this book's meta-goal is to teach tool-based thinking, encouraging you to discover and develop your own set of tools. You are also invited to contribute suggestions and new tools back to the community online at whateverworks.me.

In some chapters, I've designated one tool as a Pillar because it has impacted me greatly and I use it on a day-to-day basis. These Pillar tools, marked with the symbol \square , are more comprehensive than others, consisting of more detailed concepts and instructions for their use. They are:

- \square Getting Things Done
- \square Nonviolent Communication
- \square Meditation
- \square Jordan Peterson's Twelve Rules for Life

All the tools are grouped into six different chapters, except for one, which falls under the heading of "Meta—Seek Continuous Improvement." It's listed this way because it forms the principle that underpins every other tool and thereby deserves to be considered uniquely. After the Meta tool, you'll find the rest separated into specific chapters. Categorizing the tools was a challenge in itself because several could have fit into more than one chapter. I've placed them where I think they make the most sense and fit in most seamlessly with other tools. Some tools are loosely related to others. In those instances, you'll find a note cross-referencing the location of the connected tool.

Each tool opens with a description of the motivation for utilizing it. This is important—otherwise, why bother? Below this, I've provided a short summary of the key benefits of learning and applying the tool, along with the accompanying challenges. Below these sections, you'll find the application, which discusses how to practice the tool and/or provides examples of it in practice. Finally, if there is a reference to provide more information, it is listed at the end.

This book serves as a compendium. All told, there are almost a hundred tools here. For the simplest tools, the application section provides enough information to begin using the tool immediately. In some cases, however, whole books have been written about one tool alone, and space doesn't allow me to go into that level of depth. For these more detailed tools, the application section merely presents the method. In these cases, if you think a tool will work for you, you'll want to do a deep dive into the references provided so you can learn how to implement the tool fully.

Don't be scared by the number of tools. There's no need to aspire to apply every one. The purpose is to provide you with a selection from which you can pick and choose, discovering the tools that are most applicable to you (more on this later).

The chapters are as follows.