

Why I Am Sharing These Tools

Although I began compiling these tools and techniques a few years ago, the drive to improve my life began at a young age when I realized the huge benefits that can be gained from optimizing repeated processes. Perhaps it is only natural, then, that when I became an adult, I worked as a software engineer—a discipline where I spent a lot of my time systematically creating processes and iteratively improving upon them in order to achieve better business results.

As I developed in my professional career, I held various managerial and entrepreneurial roles where I applied the concept of iterative improvement while dealing with rapidly changing environments, opportunities, and risks. In order to achieve better business results at work and handle the ever-increasing scope of work I was doing, productivity tools became increasingly important to me. I found, however, that they were also helpful in my personal life, where being organized and undistracted enabled me to work on my relationships.

In 2015, I began exploring concurrent polyamorous relationships. Although I'm no longer practicing polyamory, this period increased the requirements for clear and efficient communication and demanded an ability to connect emotionally with others in a sustainable manner. Because I found it imperative that I work hard on my relationships, I started looking for tools to help improve both my ability to be heard and my capacity to hear and understand others.

In 2013, I began to experience cycles of hypomania and depression due to a latent bipolar disorder, only formally diagnosed in 2015. This led to a spiritual and emotional awakening; knowing that my condition had a name was a huge relief, and learning that therapy could be conducive to improving my situation also brightened my general outlook on life. Over time, I found therapy to be so profoundly helpful that I began searching for tools to augment the benefits I was receiving. Since then, I have explored a variety of techniques in self-development from various teachers and sources, always seeking tools to complement my therapy sessions.

As I have come to understand my emotions more fully, I have also sought to invest in my physical health, putting more effort into an ongoing battle with cholesterol, triglycerides, and borderline high blood sugar. I've struggled at times with a memory that doesn't always retain the information I wish it would, making tools for developing the mind invaluable. The process of developing my body and mind has also contributed to a spiritual awakening, and many of the tools in this book have fueled my efforts to deepen my spiritual capacity and understand and integrate it more effectively into my daily life.

I've been involved with start-ups for several years and coached a few managers and start-up CEOs, so I quickly realized that I had a wide business network of people who were interested in the things I'd found helpful. Start-up CEOs, mid-level managers, and others asked me for business advice, and many also sought my help dealing with office politics, career development, and numerous other topics.

I discovered that I enjoyed helping others and received great feedback. People told me that what I had to offer was truly useful. That was when I understood that I could encapsulate the tools and scale my teaching. I started by giving a presentation to teach what I'd learned, which at that point was mostly focused on productivity. The event was a success, and I proceeded to share this presentation

with a few other start-ups—after which, one organization even hung a poster of the Zuzunaga Diagram on their front door (see Tool 5.9: Find Your Purpose).

These presentations confirmed the value of what I had learned and led me to seek a medium to share the tools with even more people. I decided to create a book to make the tools more easily accessible for as many people as possible and to teach tool-based thinking.