THE SUBTLE ART OF NOT GIVING A F*CK JOURNAL

MARK MANSON

HARPER DESIGN
An Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers

THE SUBTLE ART OF NOT GIVING A F*CK JOURNAL.

Copyright © 2022 by Mark Manson.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. For information, address HarperCollins Publishers, 195 Broadway, New York, NY 10007.

HarperCollins books may be purchased for educational, business, or sales promotional use. For information, please email the Special Markets Department at SPsales@harpercollins.com.

First published in 2022 by
Harper Design
An Imprint of HarperCollins *Publishers*
195 Broadway
New York, NY 10007
Tel: (212) 207-7000
Fax: (855) 746-3023
harperdesign@harpercollins.com
www.hc.com

Distributed throughout the world by
HarperCollins *Publishers*
195 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

ISBN 978-0-06-322825-2

ISBN 978-0-06-324396-5 (merch edition)

Design by Paul Kepple and Alex Bruce at Headcase Design
based on the original by M-80 Design.

Printed in the United States of America

First Printing, 2022

THIS JOURNAL IS THE PROPERTY OF

_____

_____

CONTACT

_____

_____

(If found, please give a fuck and do the right thing!)

PART I:

THE WARM-UP

SHUT UP AND BE GRATEFUL

INSTRUCTIONS:

Use this list to write down the many things for which you're grateful. It can be abstract ("I'm grateful for being alive in the twenty-first century.") or specific ("I'm grateful that gas station I stopped at had my favorite energy drink.").

Basically, go gratitude-crazy here. Try to fill these pages up.

YOUR TURN:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

13. _____

14. _____

15. _____

16. _____

17. _____

18. _____

19. _____

20. _____

21. _____

22. _____

23. _____

24. _____

25. _____

26. _____

27. _____

28. _____

29. _____

30. _____

31. _____

32. _____

33. _____

34. _____

35. _____

36. _____

37. _____

38. _____

39. _____

40. _____

41. _____

42. _____

43. _____

44. _____

45. _____

46. _____

47. _____

48. _____

49. _____

50. _____

51. _____

52. _____

53. _____

54. _____

55. _____

56. _____

57. _____

58. _____

59. _____

60. _____

61. _____

62. _____

63. _____

64. _____

65. _____

66. _____

67. _____

68. _____

69. _____

70. _____

71. _____

72. _____

73. _____

74. _____

75. _____

76. _____

77. _____

78. _____

79. _____

80. _____

81. _____

82. _____

83. _____

84. _____

YOUR FUCK-IT LIST

Okay, now that we've spewed out all of the things we're grateful for in our lives, let's consider the other side of the coin. Much of "not giving a fuck" is correctly identifying the people and things in your life that are not adding value or helping you as a person . . . and then letting go of them.

Old people create "bucket lists" of things they want to do before they die. We're going to create a "fuck-it list," or things we want to stop giving a fuck about before we die.

Much of this journal will be showing you *how* to stop giving a fuck about them, but for now, let's just get a nice brainstorm out of all of the dumb bullshit holding us back in our lives.

Again, this can be as abstract ("fear of failure") or specific ("when my brother makes fun of my hair") as you want. Whatever it is you want to *stop* caring about, write it down.

YOUR TURN:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

13. _____

14. _____

15. _____

16. _____

17. _____

18. _____

19. _____

20. _____

21. _____

22. _____

23. _____

24. _____

25. _____

26. _____

27. _____

28. _____

29. _____

30. _____

31. _____

32. _____

33. _____

34. _____

35. _____

36. _____

37. _____

38. _____

39. _____

40. _____

41. _____

42. _____

43. _____

44. _____

45. _____

46. _____

47. _____

48. _____

49. _____

50. _____

51. _____

52. _____

53. _____

54. _____

55. _____

56. _____

57. _____

58. _____

59. _____

60. _____

61. _____

62. _____

63. _____

64. _____

65. _____

66. _____

67. _____

68. _____

69. _____

70. _____

PART II:

MANAGING NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

How Are You Feeling?

What emotion are you currently struggling with?
What happened? Describe the situation and how you've reacted to it.

YOUR TURN:

How did you react to the emotion? Did you express it? If so, how? If not, why not?

YOUR TURN:

Often our problem is not the emotion itself, but rather how we respond to the emotion. Sometimes we judge the emotion and try to bury it because we don't see it as acceptable.

What about you? Have you been judging the emotion in an unhelpful way? If so, how?

Overall, do you think you've responded to the emotion in a healthy way or unhealthy way?

YOUR TURN:

Cognitive Distortions

Cognitive distortions are a set of automatic thought patterns that are inaccurate and reinforce our emotions. These automatic negative thoughts "distort" our thinking by leading us to believe something that is both unhelpful and likely untrue.

Psychiatrist and researcher Aaron Beck is credited with first proposing the theory behind cognitive distortions in the 1970s; his student David Burns is credited with popularizing the common names of these distortions in the 1980s.

Have a look at these twelve cognitive distortions and see if you can recognize any of the thought patterns as you deal with your current emotional situation.

YOUR TURN:

All-or-Nothing Thinking	Fortune-Telling	Minimizing the Positive
Blaming Others	Labeling	Overgeneralization
Catastrophizing	Magnifying the Negative	Self-Blaming
Emotional Reasoning	Mind Reading	"Should" Statements

Now, let's try to describe your situation again, this time without succumbing to cognitive distortions.

YOUR TURN:

Emotions are neutral. Each emotion can be both healthy or unhealthy depending *on our reactions to that emotion.*

Unhealthy reactions are dishonest, ambiguous, destructive, pointless, or violent.

Healthy reactions are honest, transparent, constructive, educational, and growth-oriented.

Now, returning to your situation again, what are the healthy and unhealthy forms of the emotion in your situation?

YOUR TURN:

If reactions to emotions are more important than the emotions themselves, then we must judge people (and ourselves) by actions, not emotions.

As a final exercise, I want you to return to your situation one last time, this time asking yourself, "What is a healthy reaction to this upsetting situation?" What is a reaction that minimizes cognitive distortions; that produces better, healthier outcomes for everyone involved; and that promotes transparency and honesty?

YOUR TURN:

PART III:

BETTER PROBLEMS

What's Your Problem?

Think about a problem you're struggling with in your life. Describe the situation.

YOUR TURN:

What's Your Problem?

The first step to addressing any problem is to determine what aspects of the problem we can control and what aspects we can't control. So much of the time, we get worked up and try to change things that are outside of our control. Similarly, we complain and deflect responsibility for the things we *can* control. Until we can straighten these two categories out, we won't get anywhere.

WHAT YOU CAN *NEVER* CHANGE:

- The past
- The world
- Other people

WHAT YOU CAN *ALWAYS* CHANGE:

- Your attitude
- Your assumptions
- Your behavior

Write down the aspects of your problem that are *out of your control* and the aspects of your problem that are *within your control.*

YOUR TURN:

_____

_____

_____

_____

The vast majority of problems don't just occur out of nowhere. We have made various choices that have led to the problem, so we are partially responsible for the problem. This sense of responsibility is actually empowering because it enables us to change our choices in the future. Now, let's look at the choices you've made in the past that have led to your problem.

YOUR TURN:

Are you satisfied with those choices? Would you go back and change them? Keep in mind that no is always an acceptable answer here—if that's the case, then this is the problem you chose!

YOUR TURN:

Now that you've decided what choices you'd like to change, it's time to come up with a list of potential actions that will enact those new choices.

YOUR TURN:

Great! Obviously, go do this stuff. But, let's prevent ourselves from having to deal with this mess again. Ask yourself, what are the potential problems that will arise from these new choices? Are these better problems? If not, then you might want to go back a couple steps and re-evaluate your decisions again!

YOUR TURN:

PART IV:

GIVING FEWER FUCKS

Let's Get Started . . .

Before you use this section to work through an issue you're having, I'd like you to list your highest values so it's always here for you to come back to when you are completing a set of questions. Personal values should be used as measuring sticks by which we determine what is a successful and meaningful life. So the point is to nail down some good ones. By articulating your values upfront, you'll be in a better position to identify patterns of behavior that are contradicting the awesome person you're trying to uncover.

YOUR TURN:

Conflicting Values

Generally, the most difficult moments in our lives occur when we have two conflicting values. We want to excel at work, but we also want to be home for our kids. We want to spend more time with our friends, but we also don't want to abandon our partner. We don't want to pay our taxes, but we also don't want to go to jail for tax evasion. Life is full of these sorts of dilemmas.

When these conflicts happen between two healthy values (i.e., focusing more at work *and* spending more time with the kids), then it becomes a question of priorities and time management.

But often a good value is conflicting with a bad value (i.e., taking care of your health versus going on another all-night bender with your friends). It's these situations that we must look at closely, identify the unhealthy values and what's underpinning them, and then try to alter how much we give a fuck about them.

So, what disruption or conflict are you experiencing in your life that has led you to question your values right now? Describe the situation.

YOUR TURN:

How have your actions reflected your personal values? It's easy to say we value something, but if we're never actually *doing* it, then how much do we really value it?

YOUR TURN:

If you are struggling to match your actions against your values, what are you prioritizing instead? What do your actions actually say? What are you really valuing?

YOUR TURN:

What influences or actions can you *remove* from your life to allow you to better live out your values?

YOUR TURN:

Remember, regardless of what you think or feel or wish to be true, true values are reflected in your choices and actions

Now, look back on your answers and be truthful with yourself. Are these values serving you? Or do you need to look at adopting better values? Reflect here and go back to the beginning of the section to add and/or subtract values if you need to.

To replace your old, faulty values with new, healthy values, you need to understand the narratives around your experiences.

Choosing better values is about liberating ourselves from unhealthy ideas and inviting the right kinds of insecurities into our lives.

For example, if you're ashamed of wearing the wrong shoes around your coworkers, then that signals that your values are faulty—that you're more concerned with appearances and the approval of those around you rather than respecting yourself and your own tastes.

Describe a situation where you think replacing a faulty value with a healthier value might have improved your experience.

INTERLUDE:

KNOWING VS DOING

While your values determine your behavior—new behavior determines new values. It's not enough to simply sit here and think about what you wish to value. As my friend Derek Sivers says, "If change was as simple as knowing information, then we'd all be millionaires with six-pack abs."

Take a moment and ask yourself, what are the things in your life that you want to do and know how to do, yet you still don't do them?

As this list proves, simply valuing something is not enough to make you do it.

Values mean nothing without action. Therefore, the final part of this journal will guide you through setting yourself up for new actions and behaviors.

PART V:

FIND GREATER PURPOSE

Brainstorming

The first step is the easiest and probably the most fun. You'll take twenty minutes to yourself, and write down everything you would like to do in your life before you die. Everything. No matter how big or small, how trivial or important.

Ideal Life (Long-Term)

Now that you've done your brainstorming and come up with more ideas than you'll ever need, it's time to start homing in on what you want your life to look like. Keep in mind, anything is possible with this exercise. We're still fantasizing here. It doesn't matter how possible you feel this life is or isn't, write it down.

EXERCISE

Describe your ideal life *five years* from now. Describe it in as much detail as possible. Describe where you would live, what you would do each day, what job you'd have, who you'd spend your time with, and what you'd spend your time doing. Take your time. This should take you about twenty minutes.

Ideal Life (Short-Term)

This exercise is exactly like the last one, except instead of projecting your ideal life in five years, you are going to project it for one year. This time, make sure your choices are realistic and attainable, but also that they are a step toward your last answer.

EXERCISE

Describe your ideal life *one year* from now. Describe it in as much detail as possible. Describe where you would live, what you would do each day, what job you'd have, who you'd spend your time with, and what you'd spend your time doing. Take your time. This should take you about twenty minutes.

Giving the Proper Fucks

Now it's time to really dig into your current life. It's time to look closely at what you're spending your time doing and then root out the activities that aren't serving you or moving you toward your ideal life.

This exercise is a three-parter. First, write down everything you spend your time doing each day. Ignore the small things like brushing your teeth, showering, or sleeping. Focus on the biggies.

Once you can't think of anything else, move to the second column and write down how many hours per week you generally spend doing this activity. If it's something larger like traveling or seasonal like going to White Sox games or something, then just specify that in this column—"two weeks per year," or "ten Saturdays per year," or whatever.

Finally, in the last column, give each item a rating from 1 to 10. This should be based on how much fulfillment you get from that activity. Basically, you are rating how happy that activity makes you.

EXERCISE

Activity	Time Spent	Value

Activity	Time Spent	Value

Activity	Time Spent	Value

Activity	Time Spent	Value

Activity	Time Spent	Value

Once you've finished your lists, go back through and look at how the numbers line up. Activities that you spend a lot of time doing should have high numbers. Activities you don't spend much time doing should have low numbers. We're looking for mismatches.

How to Create a Habit

Habits form when you engage in a behavior *repeatedly in the presence of consistent stimuli*. That last part is important. Habits are "automatic" responses to familiar environmental cues. You save mental energy by developing habitual responses to familiar cues, situations, and even people who you encounter on a regular basis.

EXERCISE

Think of a new behavior you'd like to make a habit. Then think of a cue for that behavior and a way to reward yourself after performing the behavior. If the behavior itself is already rewarding for you, then the reward isn't necessary.

Make sure you specify a cue, a behavior, and a reward.

YOUR NEW HABIT #1

_____

_____

DATE IT BECAME A HABIT

_____

YOUR NEW HABIT #2

DATE IT BECAME A HABIT

YOUR NEW HABIT #3

DATE IT BECAME A HABIT

YOUR NEW HABIT #4

DATE IT BECAME A HABIT

YOUR NEW HABIT #5

DATE IT BECAME A HABIT

YOUR NEW HABIT #6

DATE IT BECAME A HABIT

YOUR NEW HABIT #7

DATE IT BECAME A HABIT

YOUR NEW HABIT #8

DATE IT BECAME A HABIT

YOUR NEW HABIT #9

DATE IT BECAME A HABIT

YOUR NEW HABIT #10

DATE IT BECAME A HABIT

Your Action Plan

From the previous steps in this section, you should have developed a pretty clear idea of what you need to be doing differently, both in the short-term and in the long-term. You've likely been made aware of things that you'd like to have in your life that you currently don't. And maybe you've identified some things that you have in your life, but you'd prefer you didn't.

EXERCISE: CREATE YOUR ACTION PLANS

Fill out an action plan below for each of your goals. If you run out of action plans, you can create new ones in the notes section at the back. You can create multiple plans for each goal (stick to about three to five for now).

ACTION PLAN #1

Long-term goal	
1-year goal	
1-month goal	

1-week goal	
Daily habit/ action	

ACTION PLAN #2

Long-term goal	
1-year goal	
1-month goal	

1-week goal	
Daily habit/ action	

ACTION PLAN #3

Long-term goal	
1-year goal	

1-month goal	
1-week goal	
Daily habit/ action	

ACTION PLAN #4

Long-term goal	

1-year goal	
1-month goal	
1-week goal	
Daily habit/ action	

ACTION PLAN #5

Long-term goal	
1-year goal	
1-month goal	
1-week goal	
Daily habit/ action	

ACTION PLAN #6

Long-term goal	
1-year goal	
1-month goal	
1-week goal	
Daily habit/ action	

ACTION PLAN #7

Long-term goal	
1-year goal	
1-month goal	
1-week goal	
Daily habit/ action	

ACTION PLAN #8

Long-term goal	
1-year goal	
1-month goal	
1-week goal	
Daily habit/ action	

ACTION PLAN #9

Long-term goal	
1-year goal	
1-month goal	
1-week goal	
Daily habit/ action	

ACTION PLAN #10

Long-term goal	
1-year goal	
1-month goal	
1-week goal	
Daily habit/ action	

A FEW PAGES OF SPACE TO WRITE DOWN VARIOUS PERSONAL REALIZATIONS