THE

WORKING MAN'S CODE

Practical rules for discipline, self-respect and everyday responsibility.



10 AREAS / ONE PERSONAL CODE

30-day programme
Eight reusable worksheets

READER NOTE

Use this book as a working tool.

Use this guide to turn a good intention into a task you can carry out, then review what happened. It is written for adult readers balancing work, relationships and ordinary responsibilities. All examples are fictional illustrations.

These standards apply to how you treat yourself and the people around you. Your income, appearance and relationship status do not determine your worth. The work is to become more honest about your choices and more reliable in your conduct.

The rules are commitments to examine and practise. Adapt them to disability, health, work, culture and caring responsibilities. A rule that makes you ignore safety, necessary care or another person's autonomy needs to be revised.

SCOPE

Health and money sections provide general education and planning prompts. They do not replace qualified medical, psychological, financial, legal or other professional advice. Use appropriate local support for individual or urgent concerns.

Editorial edition, November 2026. Original manuscript, exercises and conceptual graphics. All examples are fictional. Source notes appear at the end.

OPENING

Build a life you can trust.

It is 10:40 on a weekday evening. You are tired. A promise remains unfinished, tomorrow is unprepared and your phone is still in your hand. You tell yourself that next week will be different. For a moment, the thought feels like progress.

Tomorrow, the same conditions will probably be waiting. The turning point is a decision small enough to carry out tonight: send the overdue update, put the required document in your bag or choose where the phone will charge. One honest action creates something you can build on.

This book is about that scale of responsibility. It includes work and money, but also the way you speak when annoyed, handle a refusal and share an ordinary household task. Your character reaches people through those details.

You will recognise some rules immediately. Others may expose a gap between what you believe and what you do. Read with curiosity rather than collecting accusations against yourself. Choose the gap that matters now and give it a practical response.

A useful code becomes visible in a calendar, a conversation and a finished task. By the end of this book, you will have the materials to write your own version and test it in everyday life.

THE METHOD

Choose three. Make them observable.

Read the ten chapters to understand the territory. Then choose only three standards to practise: one for attention, one for personal care and one for responsibility. You can revisit the others later.

Translate each standard into an action with a cue, a minimum version and a way to notice completion. "Be reliable" becomes "At the end of my shift, review the promises due tomorrow and send any needed update." The smaller sentence is easier to test.

Use the 30-day programme as a sequence of short experiments. Its daily assignments are one-off exercises; they are not thirty new habits to stack onto your week. Keep practising your three chosen standards while completing only the assignments that fit safely and realistically.

Review what happened once a week. A completed minimum counts. A miss supplies information. A planned pause for illness, care or an unsuitable situation is different from forgetting; record it honestly and adapt.

Thirty days is a review period, not a guaranteed habit-formation deadline. Habit development varies substantially, as researcher Pippa Lally explains in the source notes. [5]

THE DAILY QUESTION

What would this standard look like in one action I can reasonably take today?



A weekly review helps you decide which action to repeat or change.

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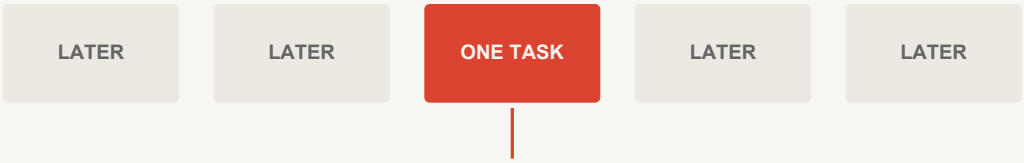
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Tap a contents entry to jump to that section. PDF bookmarks provide the same route. Rule numbers run continuously from 001 to 100.

CHAPTER 01 / RULES 001-010

Attention

Choose what gets your best hours.



Give one task a protected block.

A day can be full without containing much that matters. Messages arrive, somebody needs a favour, and a video becomes six videos. By evening, the task you care about has received whatever attention happened to remain. You can work hard all day and still keep postponing your own life.

Attention needs a place in your schedule and a boundary around it. That boundary will look different for a new parent, a shift worker and a student. The useful question is simple: when your circumstances allow you to choose, what gets the first claim on your mind?

Start with one protected block. Give it a small, visible finish line. A page written, a lesson practised or a difficult email sent is evidence you can inspect. Build your next decision from that evidence.

FIELD TEST

For seven days, protect one short work block. Record the task, the interruption and what you actually finished. Change the environment before extending the time.

RULE 001

Give your day a first priority.

Before you open other people's requests, decide which outcome would make today useful. Choose something you can finish or clearly advance. A list of twelve priorities offers no guidance when the day becomes crowded. One priority gives you a reason to decline a distraction and a way to judge the evening without counting every task you touched.

IN PRACTICE You have forty minutes before work. Choose to finish the application paragraph rather than alternate between job listings, messages and a tutorial.

DO THIS Write: "Today matters if I finish ____." Make the blank small enough to complete in the time you really have.

RULE 002

Decide before you unlock.

A phone can be a tool, a break or an escape. The distinction often begins before you touch it. Name the reason for opening it and the point at which you will stop. When the reason is finished, close it. You do not need to treat every idle minute as a productivity contest; you do need to recognise when a chosen break has become an unchosen hour.

IN PRACTICE You open your phone to reply to your brother. After replying, you notice your thumb moving towards a video app with no plan.

DO THIS Before your next unlock, say the task aloud. If you want entertainment, choose its duration instead of inventing a work-related excuse.

RULE 003

Make starting smaller.

A vague task asks you to solve the whole problem before you begin. A clear first move asks much less. "Improve my career" is heavy. "Open my CV and rewrite the first bullet" is an instruction. Keep the first move short enough to do on an ordinary evening. Once you start, you can decide whether your available energy supports more work.

IN PRACTICE After a long commute, an hour of study feels impossible. Opening the practice file and solving one question feels manageable.

DO THIS Choose one delayed task. Write its first physical action, then do that action for five minutes. Continuing is optional today.

RULE 004

Put distraction out of reach.

An environment that constantly offers interruption makes concentration harder to protect. Move the tempting object, close the spare tabs and put the required material in front of you. Use restrictions you control rather than arrangements that make you unavailable to people who depend on you. The aim is fewer unnecessary choices during the time you have already chosen to work.

IN PRACTICE You keep checking a silent phone beside your laptop. You place it on a shelf and tell your family how to reach you urgently.

DO THIS Prepare one work surface: the required document open, unrelated tabs closed and the main distraction outside your immediate reach.

RULE 005

Leave a restart note.

Interrupted work often becomes abandoned work because returning requires remembering every unfinished thought. Before you stop, leave a short note to your future self. State what you completed, what comes next and what is blocking it. This is especially useful when your work happens in small windows around employment or family responsibilities. Make the note specific enough to follow when you are tired.

IN PRACTICE You stop building a spreadsheet at bedtime. Tomorrow's note says, "Check the total in D18 against the three sample orders."

DO THIS At the end of today's work, write a two-line handover: "Done: ____. Next: ____." Add a link or filename if needed.

RULE 006

Read to answer a question.

Collecting information can feel like progress while delaying a decision. Begin a reading session with a question. Look for material that helps answer it, note what changed your understanding and decide what you will do next. Reading for pleasure needs no business justification. Learning for a project benefits from a finish line that is clearer than "become informed".

IN PRACTICE You have watched seven videos about interviews. Your actual question is how to explain a career gap in two honest sentences.

DO THIS Write one question before opening a tutorial or article. End the session with an answer, an unresolved question or a small experiment.

RULE 007

Give worry a place on paper.

When a concern interrupts your work, capture it in a sentence. Ask whether there is a useful action available now, an action to schedule or something outside your control. You may still feel worried after writing it down. The purpose is to stop repeatedly rebuilding the same unfinished decision. Persistent distress deserves support beyond a notebook; this exercise is simply a practical organising tool.

IN PRACTICE During study, you keep remembering an unpaid bill. You record its due date and set a time to check it instead of rehearsing it repeatedly.

DO THIS Make three headings: "Act", "Schedule" and "Cannot control". Place one recurring concern under the most honest heading.

RULE 008

Choose a stopping point for entertainment.

Rest is easier to enjoy when it has been chosen openly. Decide what you want to watch, play or read, and choose when you will stop. Give yourself a transition afterwards: wash up, prepare your bag or begin your evening routine. If you regularly ignore your own limit, change the setting or the format instead of writing a harsher promise.

IN PRACTICE You choose one episode after dinner and turn off autoplay. When it ends, you charge your phone outside the bedroom.

DO THIS Plan tonight's leisure before starting it. Name the activity, the stopping cue and the small action that follows.