

THE INTENTIONAL BUSINESS DESIGN WORKBOOK

A reflection guide for building a business around how your brain actually works

Strengths → Shadows → Supports → Intentional Design

Your strengths don't need fixing. They need support.

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A Different Way to Look at Your Business

Running a business asks a lot of your brain. You are not only creating ideas, solving problems, and imagining what is possible. You are also deciding what matters, setting priorities, creating deadlines, remembering details, initiating tasks, managing time, shifting attention, following through, and deciding what not to do.

For creative, high-achieving entrepreneurs, the tension can be confusing. The qualities that make you exceptional at imagining, creating, innovating, and building can also create predictable challenges in planning, prioritizing, organizing, and sustaining the business.

The goal of this workbook is not to help you become a different entrepreneur. It is to help you become a more supported one.

Use these pages to get curious about how you work. You will identify the strengths that drive your business, notice the shadow side those strengths can create, look for the executive-function friction underneath recurring struggles, and consider what supports could make the work easier.

Then you will step back and look at your business through five lenses: Strengths, Systems, People, Environment, and Sustainability. The purpose is not to redesign everything. It is to notice where a more intentional design could give your strengths more room to flourish.

As you work through the exercises, keep one question nearby:

What would help me do my best work?

How to use this workbook

- ☐ Move through it in order, or begin with the page that feels most relevant right now.
- ☐ Write what is true, not what you think an entrepreneur is supposed to say.
- ☐ Look for patterns rather than isolated failures.
- ☐ Choose supports that reduce friction instead of adding another complicated system to maintain.
- ☐ Leave with one intentional change you are willing to experiment with.

1 | My Strengths, Shadows & Supports

A strength can be genuinely valuable and still create a predictable challenge. Creativity can generate extraordinary ideas and more ideas than you can execute. Curiosity can make you a lifelong learner and pull you into rabbit holes. Passion can fuel your work and make it hard to know when to stop.

Every strength casts a shadow. The goal isn't to lose the strength. It's to understand the shadow it creates - and build supports around it.

For each strength below, describe what it gives you when it is working well, what its shadow side looks like in your real business, and what kind of support might allow you to keep the strength without letting the shadow run the company. Consider supports that can help to reduce the shadow sides presence.

MY STRENGTH	WHEN IT'S WORKING FOR ME...	ITS SHADOW CAN LOOK LIKE...	WHAT SUPPORT DOES IT NEED?
Creativity			
Curiosity			
Vision			
Passion			
Hyperfocus			

Other:			
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Reflection

The strength I most want to protect is:

The shadow that creates the most friction in my business is:

One support I could put around it is:

2 | Where Is the Friction?

Knowing what to do and being able to consistently do it are not the same thing. A task can look simple on paper while quietly asking your brain to decide, prioritize, estimate time, remember details, initiate, organize, sustain attention, shift, tolerate boredom or discomfort, and finish.

Instead of asking, “Why haven't I done this?” ask, “What is this task actually asking my brain to do?”

Choose one real friction point

Think of something in your business that you repeatedly avoid, delay, forget, overcomplicate, or struggle to finish.

The thing I keep struggling with is:

What is this asking my brain to do?

- ☐ Decide
- ☐ Prioritize
- ☐ Plan
- ☐ Estimate time
- ☐ Remember
- ☐ Get started
- ☐ Organize information or steps
- ☐ Sustain attention
- ☐ Shift attention when needed
- ☐ Notice when I'm off track
- ☐ Finish
- ☐ Manage boredom, uncertainty, rejection, or another uncomfortable emotion

Where does the friction seem to be strongest?

What might make this easier?

- ☐ A clearer decision rule
- ☐ A deadline
- ☐ Accountability or body doubling
- ☐ A reminder or visual cue

- ☐ A template or checklist
- ☐ Fewer steps
- ☐ A calendar block or external stopping cue
- ☐ Technology or automation
- ☐ Another person
- ☐ Delegation
- ☐ A boundary
- ☐ Permission to stop doing it altogether

Find the friction. Build the support.

3 | The Five Lenses of Intentional Business Design

Individual supports matter, but sometimes the larger opportunity is to redesign the way the business itself works. Use these five lenses to notice where your current business supports your brain - and where it asks you to fight yourself.

The question is not: “How should I run my business?” The question is: “How do I do my best work?”

1. STRENGTHS

Where am I at my best?

- ☐ I know the work that energizes me.
- ☐ I know what I do exceptionally well.
- ☐ My role allows me to spend meaningful time using those strengths.
- ☐ I protect time for the work I do best.
- ☐ I can identify where my strengths also create predictable challenges.

One thing I want more space for:

2. SYSTEMS

What can carry the executive-function load?

- ☐ I have a reliable place to capture ideas.
- ☐ Important tasks do not depend entirely on me remembering them.
- ☐ I have simple systems for recurring work.
- ☐ I use reminders, templates, automation, or checklists where helpful.
- ☐ My systems reduce friction rather than create more of it.

One thing my brain is carrying that a system could carry instead:

3. PEOPLE

Who complements me?

- ☐ I know which work drains me or consistently gets stuck.
- ☐ I know where another person's strengths could complement mine.
- ☐ I ask for help before I am completely overwhelmed.
- ☐ I delegate based on strengths - not simply on what I am capable of doing.
- ☐ I build accountability or collaboration where I need it.

One thing I may no longer need to be the person doing:

4. ENVIRONMENT

What helps me work?

- ☐ I know when and where I do my best thinking.
- ☐ My workspace supports my attention.
- ☐ I know whether I work better with quiet, stimulation, movement, music, or other people nearby.
- ☐ I use visual or external cues when they help.
- ☐ I intentionally create conditions that make starting and focusing easier.

One change that could make my environment work better for my brain:

5. SUSTAINABILITY

Can I do this without borrowing energy from tomorrow?

- ☐ My workload reflects my actual capacity.
- ☐ I leave room for recovery and white space.
- ☐ I have boundaries around my time and availability.
- ☐ I pause before saying yes simply because something is exciting.
- ☐ The way I am running my business is sustainable - not merely possible.

One thing I need to protect, reduce, or say no to:

My biggest opportunity for intentional redesign is:

4 | My One Intentional Change

Insight matters, but you do not need to overhaul your entire business to use what you have learned. *Choose one change **that reduces friction, protects a strength, or moves executive-function load out of your head and into a support.***

I don't need to redesign everything. One intentional change can reduce a lot of friction.

Something I understand differently about myself now:

A strength I want to protect:

A friction point I want to address:

The support I will experiment with:

One thing I will redesign, delegate, systematize, simplify, or stop doing:

My experiment for the next 7 days

What will I try?

How will I know it helped?

5 | Giving Yourself Permission

Intentional business design is not only about systems and strategy. It is also about permission: permission to stop measuring yourself against someone else's model of entrepreneurship and to trust what you have learned about the conditions in which you do your best work.

You may be perfectly capable of doing something and still decide that you should not be the person doing it. You may decide that a system everyone recommends is not your system. You may protect creative time, ask for help, work differently, say no, or build a team that complements you.

Support isn't weakness. Support is strategy.

What are you ready to give yourself permission to do differently?

- ☐ Delegate something I am capable of doing but should not be spending my energy on.
- ☐ Stop using a system that has never worked for me.
- ☐ Protect the time when I do my best creative or strategic work.
- ☐ Ask for help or accountability.
- ☐ Say no before I am overcommitted.
- ☐ Build more recovery and white space into the way I work.
- ☐ Stop comparing my business to someone else's.
- ☐ Stop interpreting every struggle as evidence that I am doing something wrong.
- ☐ Work differently because differently works better for me.

I GIVE MYSELF PERMISSION TO...

A Final Reflection

When you understand yourself differently, you start asking different questions. Instead of demanding more effort, you can get curious about friction. Instead of trying to eliminate the parts of you that feel inconvenient, you can understand the shadow they create. Instead of carrying every operational detail in your head, you can build systems, people, environments, and boundaries that support you.

What do I need to do my best work?

Your business does not have to look like anyone else's. Your schedule, systems, team, workday, and definition of productivity do not have to look like theirs either.

You are allowed to build differently.

The goal isn't to become a different entrepreneur.

The goal is to become a more supported one.

My next step:
