



5 Minute Strategic Mindset

"There is one thing stronger than all the armies of the world, and that is an idea whose time has come" Victor Hugo



Nested values

I frequently have aspiring or new consultants taking me out for coffee or lunch, asking me about how I've built a successful consulting practice. In the first 2 minutes I share my Three Rules (which I'll write about next week), and in the next 2 minutes, I'll often also share my Four Criteria. When I was starting out, before I worked out what a great project looked like, I struggled with clients who drained me, or where I felt a poor fit between me and the work. Now, I try to hit all four of the following: (1) I'm with people I truly like; (2) They're adding something to society; (3) We're working with stimulating ideas that substantially progress their objectives; and (4) They have an ability to pay in proportion to the value received.

In a conversation with a friend, Russell, it dawned on me that these criteria actually equate to values: liking, contribution, curiosity and money. We talked about 'nested values' where we are most deeply satisfied when each value 'nests' inside others. For instance, I wouldn't want a well paid project that wasn't stimulating, or with people I didn't respect. I wouldn't want to work with people I like where they weren't creating something of value. Importantly, nested values are not obvious at first pass — you have to push through a bunch of unaligned projects to realise, "I don't want to do that again".

Question: "What are your Top 4 'nested values' that you want satisfied in most, if not all, areas of your work?"

Google Home

My 10 year old son has relocated our **Google Home** from our dining room to his bedroom. Should I be concerned? Well, I can track what he's asking it. "Hey Google, Tell me the history of the Teletubbies", "Hey Google, When was the saxophone invented?", "Hey Google, Who was the shortest man ever?". Harmless stuff, and I'm seriously impressed with his testing of Google's natural language comprehension: It can understand "Hey Google, Which of these wars occurred first, the English Civil War, or the American Civil War?" He also has gained a new leap of independence, by asking Google Home to put him to sleep: "Goodnight Google" he says. Google responds by offering to create a bedtime routine, asking him what time he wants to wake up, and what sounds he wants to fall asleep to. In the mornings now, I don't have the teeth-wrenching task of repeatedly trying to rouse a reluctant boy — Google does the job nicely, and he bounds downstairs at 6.45 chirpy as a bird. I'm impressed.

Question: "What routine processes could you automate using natural language rule-based artificial intelligence?"

Disproportionate reward

I've mostly stopped going to the gym. Since December, I've been three times. Why? It makes no sense, given that I've found a half-hour model that is as effective as my former one-hour regime. And, that after my half hour I spend a half hour in the infrared sauna, with work, and it's where I have my clearest revelations, and do my best 'breakthrough' thinking. Once I realised this, I seriously contemplated going *every day*, with sauna afterwards, as I felt certain it would positively impact the quality of my work. There's a fair body of evidence that frequency, not quantity, of exercise works best (the famous **pomodoro technique** prescribes 25 minutes of sedentary activity punctuated with 5 minutes of movement). My friend Russell recently did a social challenge where he and a group of friends provided social incentives to do 100 pushups every day. His method was to do them in numerous small chunks, and found it easy to do 200 by the end of the month. He said he's never felt better (and he's pretty fit!). So, I'm keen to experiment with disproportionate reward: getting maximum return from very small chunks of exercise (and sauna) — I'll let you know how it's working out.

Question: What should you do more of, in small quantities, frequently?

Andrew Hollo wins the international award for the Society for the Advancement of Consulting's **Consultant of the Year 2020**



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