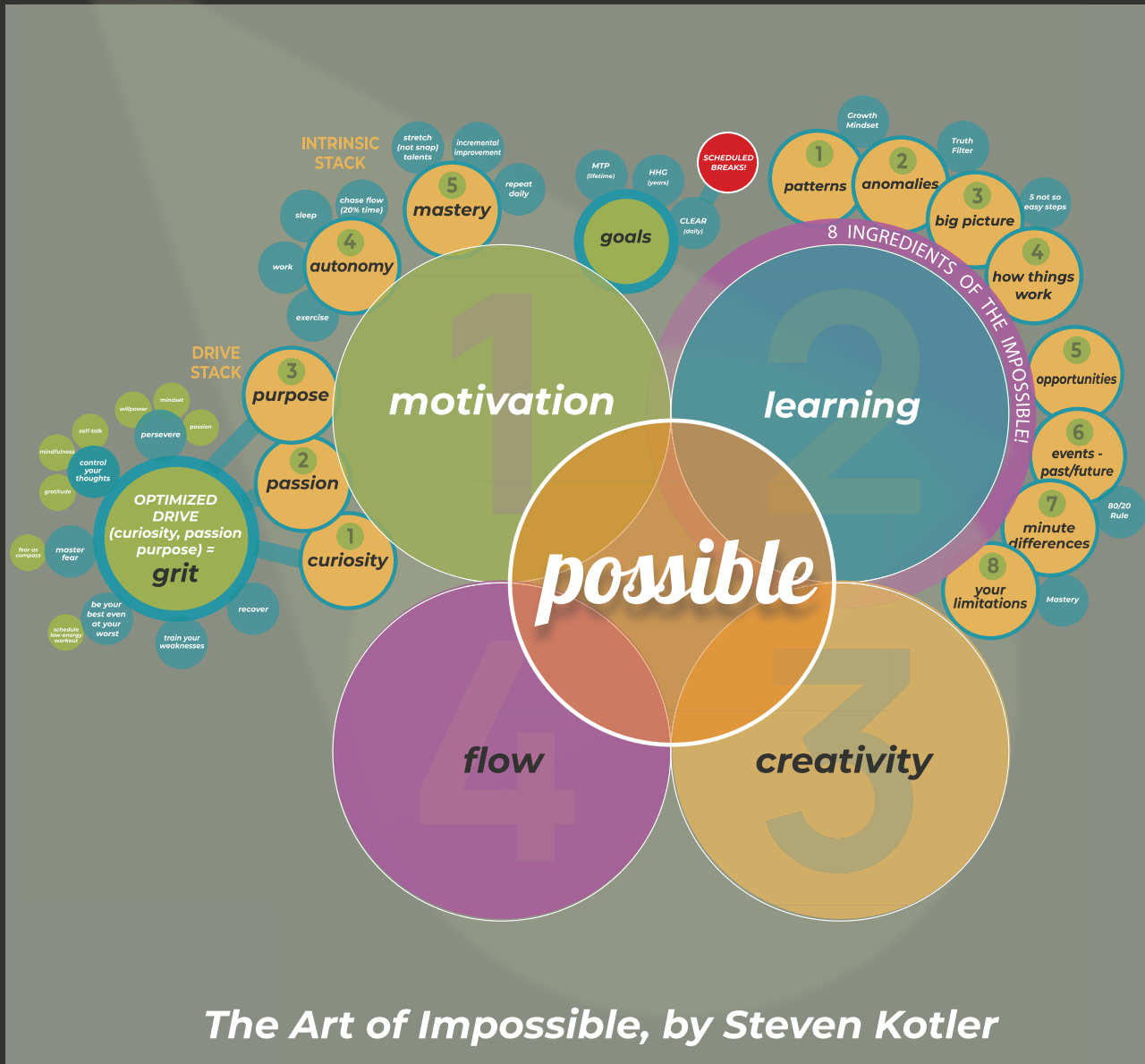




# EXPLORATIONS & PRACTICES

the ART of IMPOSSIBLE  
by Steven Kotler  
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# IMPOSSIBLE



*The Art of Impossible, by Steven Kotler*



## **Table of Contents**

### **Part I Motivation**

#### **CHAPTERS 1 - 6**

- 1 Motivation Decoded (Curiosity p 4)*
- 2 The Passion Recipe (Passion exercises p 5 - 7), (Purpose exercises p. 9 - 11)*
- 3 The Full Intrinsic Stack (Autonomy exercises p 12), (Mastery exercises p 13)*
- 4 Goals (exercises p 14 - 15)*
- 5 Grit (exercises p 16 - 17)*
- 6 The Habit of Ferocity*

### **Part II Learning**

#### **CHAPTERS 7- 14**

- 7 The Ingredients of Impossible*
- 8 Growth Mindsets and Truth Filters*
- 9 The ROI on Reading*
- 10 Five Not-So-Easy Steps for Learning Almost Anything (exercises p 18 - 23)*
- 11 The Skill of Skill*
- 12 Stronger*
- 13 The 80/20 of Emotional Intelligence*
- 14 The Shortest Path to Superman*

### **Part III Creativity**

#### **CHAPTERS 15- 23**

- 15 The Creative Advantage (coming in the December Newsletter)*
- 16 Hacking Creativity (coming in the December Newsletter)*
- 17 Long-Haul Creativity (coming in the December Newsletter)*
- 18 The Flow of Creativity (coming in the December Newsletter)*

### **Part IV Flow**

#### **CHAPTERS 19- 23**

- 19 The Decoder ring (coming in the January Newsletter)*
- 20 Flow Science (coming in the January Newsletter)*
- 21 Flow Triggers (coming in the January Newsletter)*
- 22 The Flow Cycle (coming in the January Newsletter)*
- 23 All Together Now (coming in the January Newsletter)*

*Glossary of terms (p 24 - 25)*

*Drive/Curiosity:* **TASK 1: The List!** Write a list of 25 things you are curious about (be specific, not general topics).

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

13. \_\_\_\_\_

14. \_\_\_\_\_

15. \_\_\_\_\_

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19. \_\_\_\_\_

20. \_\_\_\_\_

21. \_\_\_\_\_

22. \_\_\_\_\_

23. \_\_\_\_\_

24. \_\_\_\_\_

25. \_\_\_\_\_



**EXERCISE: Feed your curiosities.**

Play in the intersections 20-30 minutes per day.

*Kotler tells us that, “a slow-growth strategy takes advantage of how the brain processes this information. Incubation = pattern recognition. Over time, this develops expertise, which leads to less work.”*



## **EXERCISE: Go Public.**

Kotler instructs us to, *“light the fire with a series of public successes. Positive feedback from others can fuel our purpose. Social reinforcement increases the brain to release more dopamine and increases curiosity and passion. Simple conversations will be fine. Teach people about what you are learning. Relating to others helps your purpose to survive and thrive.”* And, he adds, *“purpose creates a forcefield and protects you from yourself and the threat of you being swallowed whole by your new passion. Purpose acts as a rallying cry and attracts others to your cause.”*



*Drive/Purpose:* **TASK4: Putting purpose into practice.** Write down 15 problems in the world you would love to see solved. Kotler asks, “what keeps you up at night? Be as specific as possible.”

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
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11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_
15. \_\_\_\_\_

*Drive/Purpose:* **TASK 5: Identify where your Passion intersects with World**

**Problems.** Review your previous list of passions (Task 2), and compare with the list of problems from Task 4. Kotler says, “this overlap between passion and purpose will help you to do real good in the world.”

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*{The more you optimize the 3 components of “Drive,”  
“Grit” will naturally develop.}*

### **EXERCISE: The Big Picture.**

Fuel your purpose, first as a hobby, on nights and weekends. This will take the pressure off of you relying on this new venture to pay your bills. Once momentum and income increase, your new purpose can become your new career if you wish.

## **EXERCISE: Autonomy**

List some actions you can take to gain more autonomy with: exercise, work, sleep, and chasing flow (20% time). Schedule these on your calendar.

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## **EXERCISE: Mastery**

What are the next, small but immediate steps you need to take to obtain mastery and expertise (remember to stretch your abilities, not to the point of snapping them). Get these on your calendar, and take steps daily.

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*Goals:* **TASK:** How are the 3 strata of your goals stacking up? Take a moment to list some here.

**Massively Transformative Purpose [MTP]** (*may take a lifetime*) \_\_\_\_\_

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**High, Hard Goal [HHG]** (*may take years to accomplish*)

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**Clear Goals (daily task list)** *Establish what's **your maximum** number, then write this list at the end of each day, for the day to follow.*

**What will you do tomorrow?** *Write that list here: (remember, you get a hit of dopamine each time you check a box!)*

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	_____



**EXERCISE: *Relax!***

List relaxing, rejuvenating, fun... things you can do during your scheduled breaks.

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**Grit: TASK 1: Mindset** - Identify a challenge you are facing. What effort/s can you employ to overcome this? Do you see a pattern where you make the same mistake over and over: What can you do differently next time? What curiosities do you have that, by seeking their answers, might point you in the path of a solution to your challenge?

Challenge: \_\_\_\_\_

Efforts: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Patterns I repeat/Curiosities/New actions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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**Grit: TASK 2: Persistence** - What is one, low-energy workout (Kotler does 200 pushups) you can do for challenging days?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Grit: TASK 3: Mental Hygiene** - What negative phrase do you hear in your mind? (List that here). Then, write 3 positive attributes you possess that override the negative belief.

\_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**EXERCISE: *Gratitude***

Daily, list 10 things you are grateful for (*take a moment to feel each one*).

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## **EXERCISE: “Five Books of Stupid”**

Kotler lays out five steps that can help you learn nearly anything. **In this first step**, write down five books about a topic that interests you, listing them in an ever-increasing level of difficulty.

Begin with something approachable and popular, then gradually read more technical books, and finally read a fifth book regarding the future of the field.

*Learning*: **TASK 1: Write your list of five books.** As you read, take note of 3 things: the Historical Narrative, Terminology, and always take notes on the Stuff that Excites You! Include any questions that intrigue you.

[1] \_\_\_\_\_

[2] \_\_\_\_\_

[3] \_\_\_\_\_

[4] \_\_\_\_\_

[5] \_\_\_\_\_

Questions: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **EXERCISE: “Be the Idiot”**

Take any unanswered questions from your list on page 19, and seek out experts for their answers.



*Learning:* **TASK 2: Explore the gaps.** After speaking with the experts, what questions remain unanswered? What new questions arose that the experts could not answer (they were outside of their specialization). Write these questions here, and what answers you find:

Questions: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **EXERCISE: “Always ask the next question.”**

Find a new set of experts that offer contradictory information from your previous set.

You will know you have arrived at a stopping point, when everything you thought you knew is incorrect!



## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS:**

**DRIVE:** Powerful emotional motivators that drive our behavior automatically.

**STACK:** Cultivate, align, amplify, and deploy

**MTP:** Massively Transformative Purpose

**HHG:** High, Hard Goal

## **GREAT SUMMARY OF BOOK**

## **KEY TO THE 6 PLEASURE DRUGS:**

### **DOPAMINE**

*Affect:* produces all the stages of desire. excitement, meaning, enthusiasm

*Experiences:* play, dancing or cooking, sex, shopping

Dopamine helps with these functions: 1. Focus, 2. Tuning signal to noise ratios, 3. helps us to detect more patterns and then creative ideas tend to spiral, 4. it is a reward chemical/feel good drug which drives behavior, and 5. amplifies memory.

### **OXYTOCIN**

*Affect:* produces: trust, love, and friendship. underpins fidelity and empathy; and heightens cooperation and communication

*Experiences:* play, connecting with others

### **NOREPINEPHRINE**

*Affect:* produces increase in energy and alertness. This is present when you are obsessed with an idea, can't stop working on a project, or thinking about a person you just met.

*Experiences:* exercise, sleep, small accomplishments, music, meditation

### **SEROTONIN**

*Affect:* calming, peaceful chemical, providing a gentle lift in mood, satisfaction, contentment, and the "feeling of a job well done"

*Experiences:* exercise, gratitude, self-care, spending time with people you love

### **ENDORPHINES & ANANDAMIDE**

*Affect:* painkilling bliss producers. heavy-duty weight lifters, euphoria, relaxed happiness, "all is right in the world"

*Experiences:* runner's high, exercise, sex, laughter, dancing, and listening to music

### **PAIRINGS:**

Dopamine + Oxytocin = blend beneath the delight of play

Norepinephrine + Dopamine = passion, like an artist for their craft, to the passion of romantic love

All 6 = FLOW is the biggest neuro-chemical cocktail of all. It may be the only time you get all 6 at one time. Flow is the source-code for intrinsic motivation.