INSTRUMENT ONE · THE RULED SHEET

The Receipt

FROM CHAPTER 23



At the end of the day, or the next morning if the end of the day is beyond you, write one line. The biggest thing you did. And what did not happen after it.

Measure what did not happen next, not how you felt. You do not have to feel anything to see it. A day you could not write a line was an expensive day.

DAY	THE BIGGEST THING I DID	WHAT DID NOT HAPPEN AFTER IT

INSTRUMENT ONE · A WORKED FORTNIGHT

The Receipt

FROM CHAPTER 23



An illustration, not a real person's fortnight. Every pattern in it is one the book describes.

DAY	THE BIGGEST THING I DID	WHAT DID NOT HAPPEN AFTER IT
Mon	*Team meeting, 10:00 to 11:30*	*Did not cook. Cereal at nine. Lost the evening.*
Tue	*Phone call to the bank. Nine minutes.*	*Nothing else happened that afternoon.*
Wed	*Four hours on the report*	*Fine, actually. Walked after.*
Thu		*Could not write a line. Expensive day.*
Fri	*Leaving drinks for a colleague, one hour*	*Saturday gone.*
Sat	*Recovering*	*Did not answer anybody.*
Sun	*Food shop*	*Sat in the car outside for twenty minutes.*
Mon	*Doctor's appointment*	*Did not go back to work. Slept.*
Tue	*Two short calls, cameras on*	*Could not start the email I have been avoiding.*
Wed	*Home, no meetings*	*Cooked. Called my sister.*
Thu	*The email I avoided for a month*	*Forty minutes. Cost almost nothing.*
Fri	*Family dinner*	*Friday night and most of Saturday.*
Sat	*Nothing planned*	*Scrolled. Came out worse. (See Fake Rest.)*
Sun	*Long walk. Chose it.*	*The evening was fine.*

WHAT THIS FORTNIGHT SHOWS

The expensive items were short and had other people in them. The nine-minute call, the one hour of drinks, the dinner. The four hours of work cost almost nothing. The email avoided for a month took forty minutes. Nobody could have told you any of that in advance, including you.

INSTRUMENT ONE · AFTER TWO WEEKS

The Receipt: the sort

FROM CHAPTER 23



Two weeks is enough, ideally with one bad stretch in it, because a fortnight of good days prices nothing accurately. Take the expensive items and put each one in a box.

KEEP

A job, a child, an appointment. You are not going to stop buying these. But now you know the price, stop stacking three of them on one day.

MAKE CHEAPER. THIS IS WHERE MOST OF THE GAIN IS.

Same thing, different format. A message instead of a call. Delivered instead of in person. The obligation for one hour, with the exit arranged before you arrive.

STOP BUYING

Expensive, recurring, and for nothing. You kept these because you never saw the price.