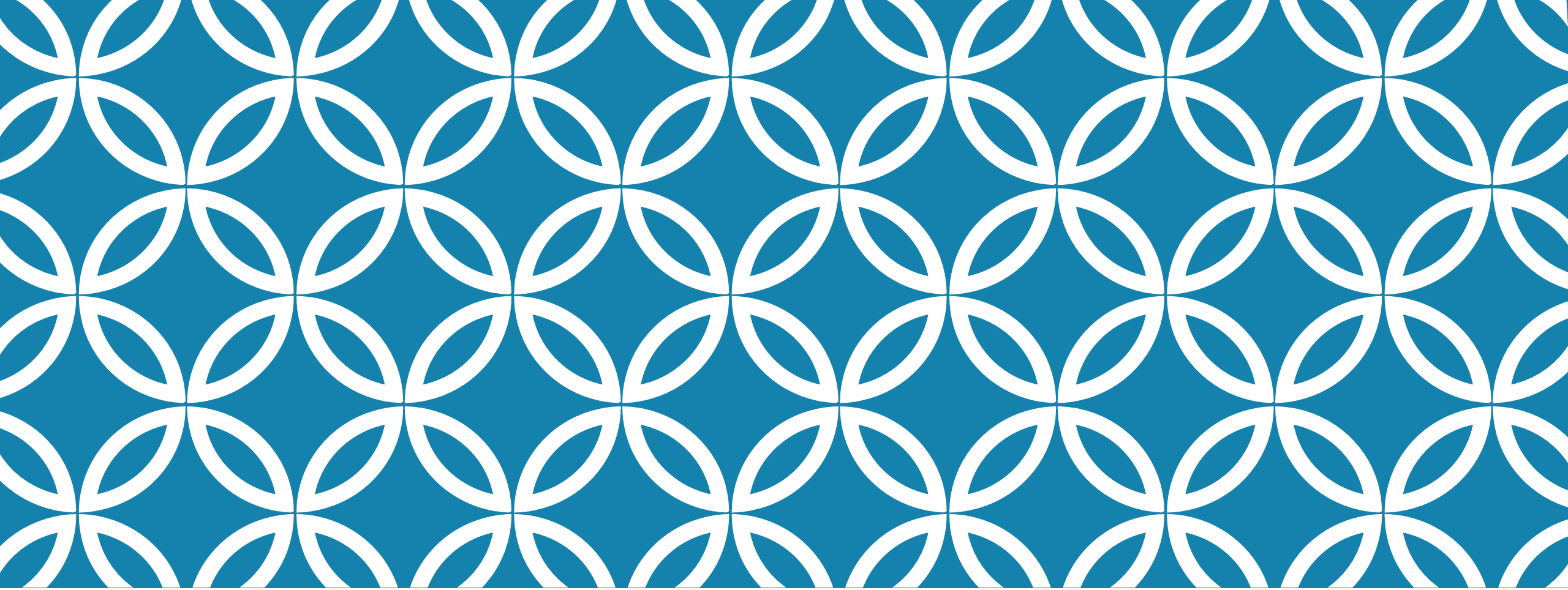
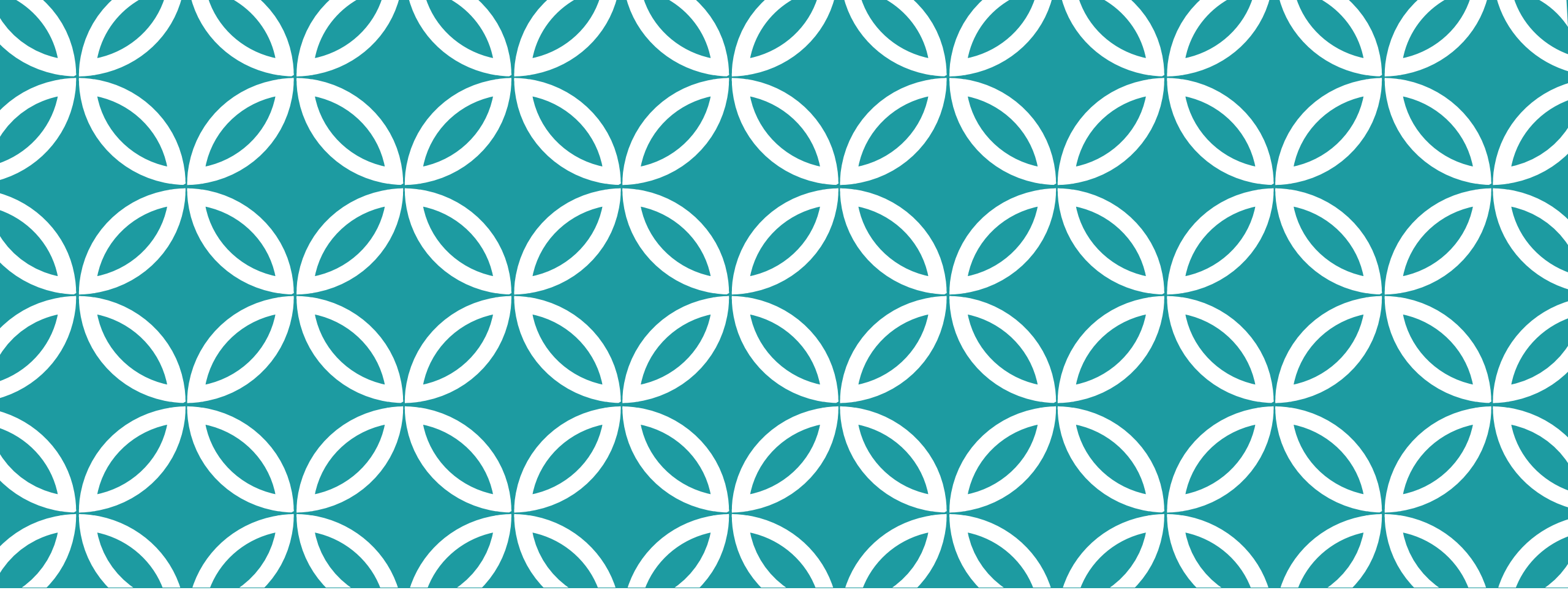


EVERYTHING I'VE READ ABOUT HOW TO BEST MANAGE YOUR TIME IN ACADEMIA

WHAT WE'LL TALK ABOUT

1. time/energy management
2. maximizing research time/output
3. minimizing teaching time



STRUCTURING THE WORKWEEK + MANAGING YOUR ENERGY

ON MENTAL HEALTH IN ACADEMIA

SOME COMMON EXCUSES

- it's just **some** grad students (who should not be here)
- it's just the **job market** (you'll be happier on the tenure track)
- it's just **the tenure process** (you'll be happier once you are tenured)

→ **WRONG:** often tenured professors are doing even worse than younger academics!

(https://www.chronicle.com/article/Avoiding-PTDS-Post-Tenure/151553)

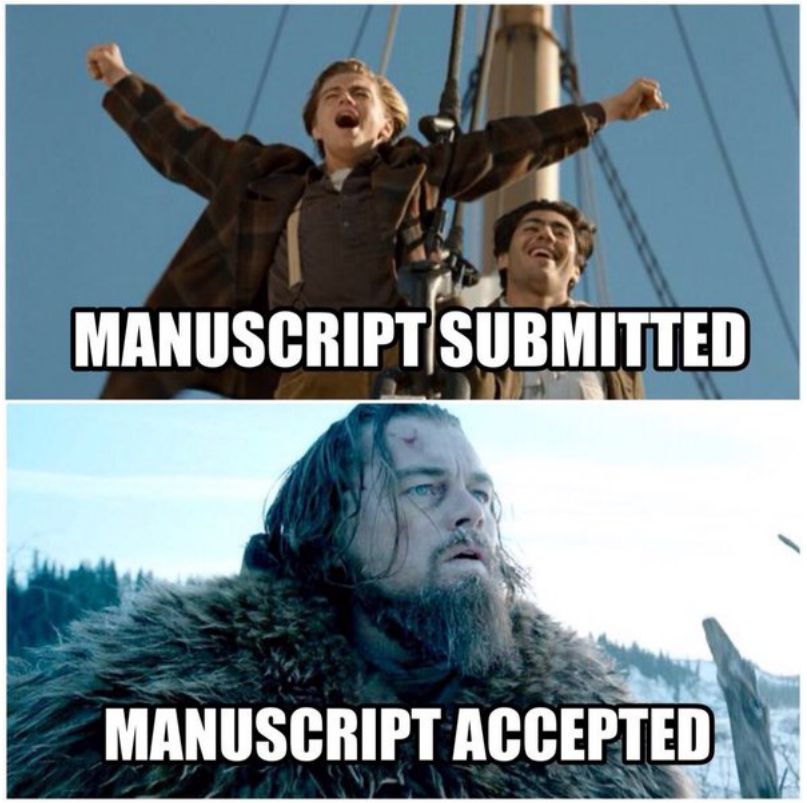
just google this to find an enormous amount of extremely depressing reporting

ON MENTAL HEALTH IN ACADEMIA

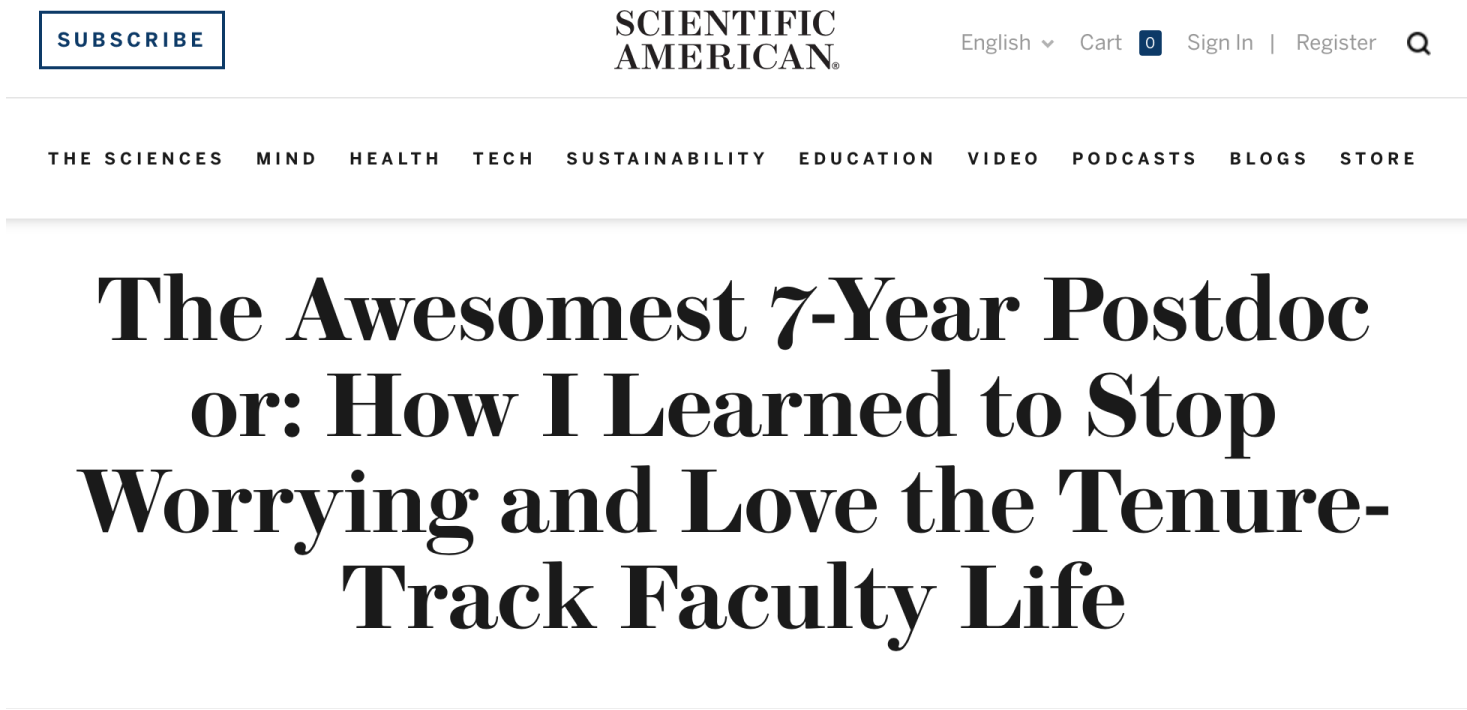
IT'S THE SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST!

→ WRONG!

- it's actually just **bad management** and **lack of training** (and a very unhelpful culture of overwork; and neoliberalism of course)
- and it's a **huge waste** of human time and potential (it's way easier to teach people basic self-management techniques than any topic required for a Ph.D.)



A VERY GOOD READ



https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/guest-blog/the-awesomest-7-year-postdoc-or-how-i-learned-to-stop-worrying-and-love-the-tenure-track-faculty-life/

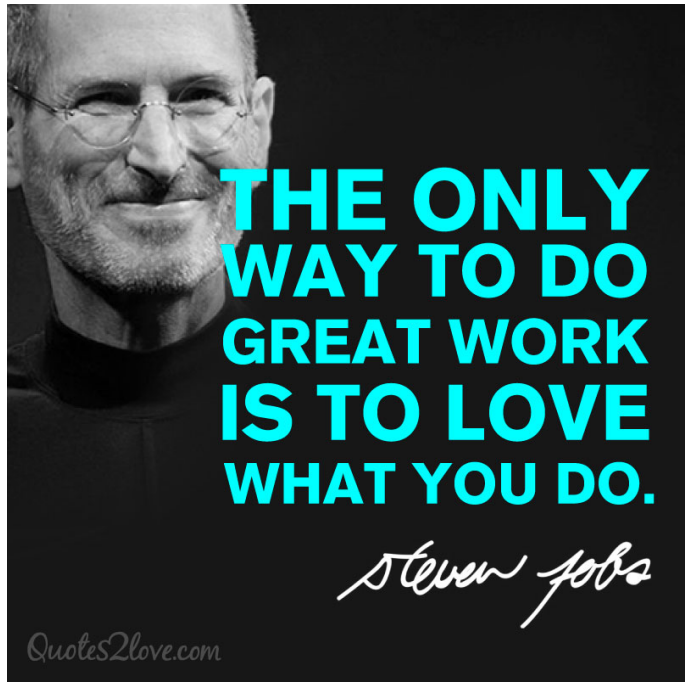
ON WORKING 70+HOUR WEEKS

- nobody actually does that (people reporting over 40 hours a week wildly overestimate)
- if they do, they die
- it can't all be quality work
- **well-planned, strategic, and focused 40 hours are actually a HUGE AMOUNT OF TIME** - provided you put it towards the most important tasks

MORE IS NOT MORE: it's basically the difference between a giant house full of junk and a well-designed, uncluttered apartment.

BUT THIS IS WHO I AM/WHO I WANT TO BE!

- that's such an American thing to say! (the trap of «doing what you love»)
- you can be better at this (or just as good) AND not spend your evenings/weekends working
- because **there is no way all of the hours you are putting in are high quality hours** if you always go above 40 hours a week!
- also, that's really not a race you want to compete in!



PLUS NO AMOUNT OF OVERWORK WILL GUARANTEE THAT YOU WILL GET THAT POSITION/JOB/WHATEVER!

BUT I WILL NEVER MAKE IT IF I SLOW DOWN!

REVERSE EXCEPTIONALITY FALLACY (aka impostor syndrome)

- others might be able to work shorter hours, but I just have to work super long hours just to keep up

→ you are just making yourself stupider and slower by being overtired

GUILT AND MOTIVATION FALLACY

- if I don't set crazy goals and high standards for myself, I will never get anything done. Feeling bad is the only thing that keeps me motivated.

→ **guilt is not going to make you a better scholar**. Just like guilt about eating is not going to make you thinner (it's actually going to do the opposite!)

GETTING THE HOURS UNDER CONTROL: FIXED SCHEDULE PRODUCTIVITY

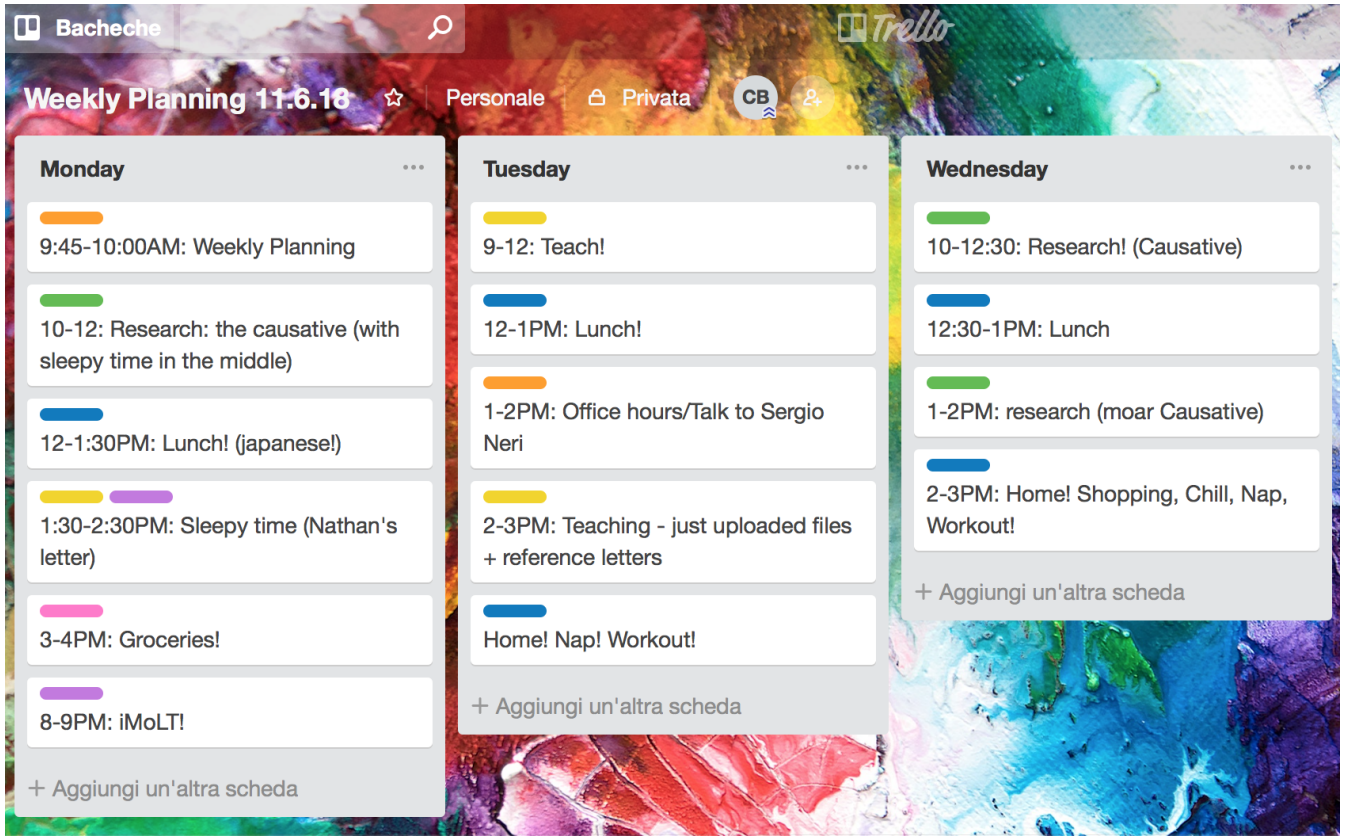
A 2-WEEK EXPERIMENT

- you are only going to work for **40 hours/week**
- you will split those hours **according to your priorities** (e.g. 50% teaching, 40% research, 10% service/job market)
- you will **set 3 most important goals for each week**
- no multitasking
- no interruptions
- at the office/dedicated workspace

INSTRUCTIONS

- block out the hours you will work, and **decide what you will do in each time block** (2 hours max, with breaks in between)
- most likely **you will overestimate** what you can accomplish in each block
- that's actually part of the learning: how long does it actually take you to do stuff?
- to get a better idea (and feel better about yourself): **at the end of each block,** take 1 minute to **jot down all the small tasks you've accomplished**

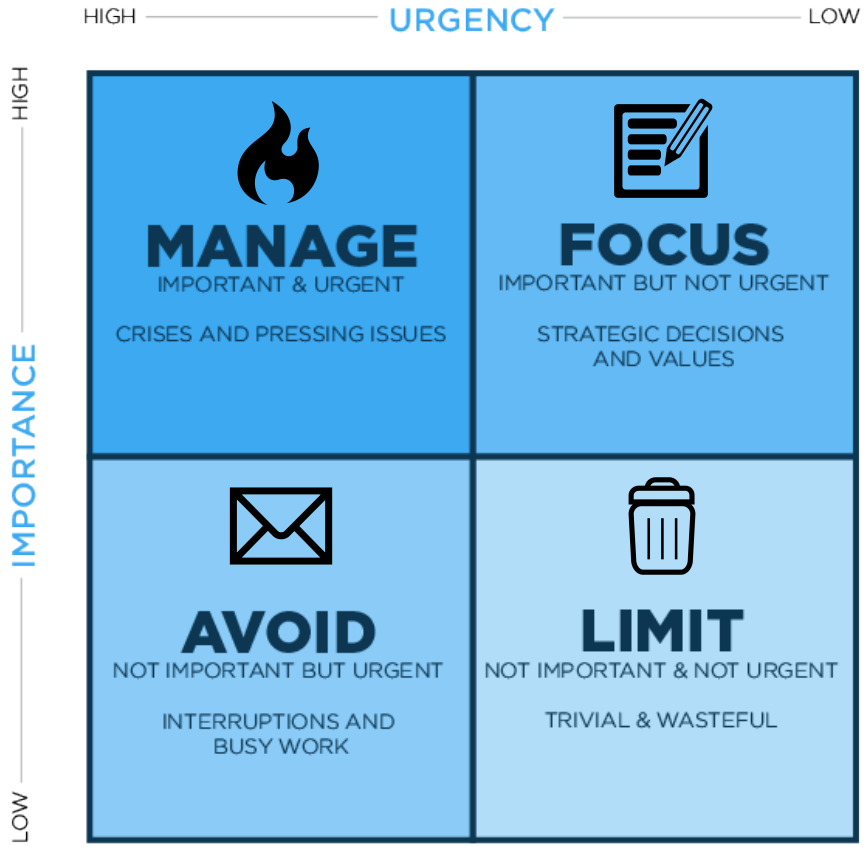
FIXED-SCHEDULE PRODUCTIVITY IN TRELLO



- set **3 MOST IMPORTANT TASKS** for the week
- **allocate your time-blocks to different areas** (e.g., research/teaching/advising)
- **set goals for each time block** (more detailed=better)
- be flexible and **revise** as you go
- at the end of the week, **count your totals**!

«BUT I HAVE WAY TOO MUCH TO DO»

TRY THE IMPORTANT/URGENT MATRIX!

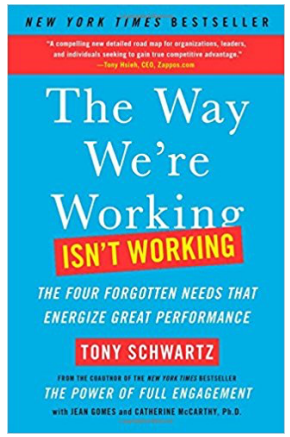


- you will never get EVERYTHING done. **That's OK**
- because not everything deserves getting done!
- when planning your day, **give prime time to IMPORTANT/NON-URGENT TASKS (=RESEARCH)**
- do not let the important stuff get urgent!
- just **do not do** the non-important stuff!

main take-away:

1. **DO NOT START YOUR DAY WITH EMAIL!!**
2. **DO start your day with RESEARCH**
3. **DO NOT LET DEADLINES GET TOO CLOSE**

MANAGING YOUR ENERGY



10-12	2 HOUR RESEARCH-BLOCK
12-1	1 HOUR LUNCH-BLOCK
1-2	1 HOUR JUNK-BLOCK (EMAIL)
2-4	2 HOUR TEACHING-BLOCK

WORK IN FOCUSED TIME BLOCKS: Start with shorter times, gradually built up to long blocks of complete concentration. 2 hours is a good upper limit. Do not work more than 2 hours w/o standing up, drinking water, and moving around a bit.

MAKE WAVES: alternate time blocks for work with **short and longer breaks** to renew your energy (by eating/resting/exercising). This way you can actually work longer hours with more focus.

JUNK HOUR i like to schedule this after lunch, when I'm normally sleepy. I use it to deal with email and other small mindless tasks. It's OK to have distractions during this block.

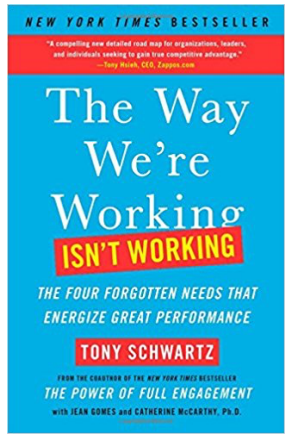
NEVER START YOUR DAY WITH EMAIL /OTHER REACTIVE WORK

you can take care of those when you are tired/unfocused

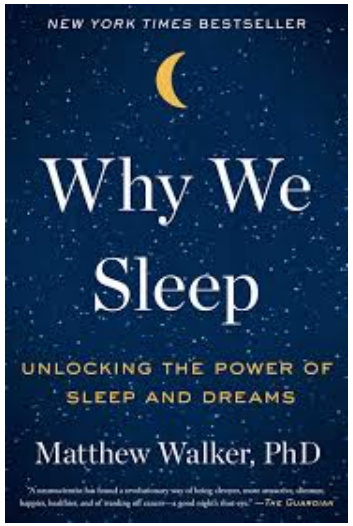
(again, these are most likely items which are **non-important and urgent**)

- if it's pleasant email, you can use it as a reward later in the day
- if it's unpleasant email, you don't want to burn your best energy on it

MANAGING YOUR ENERGY



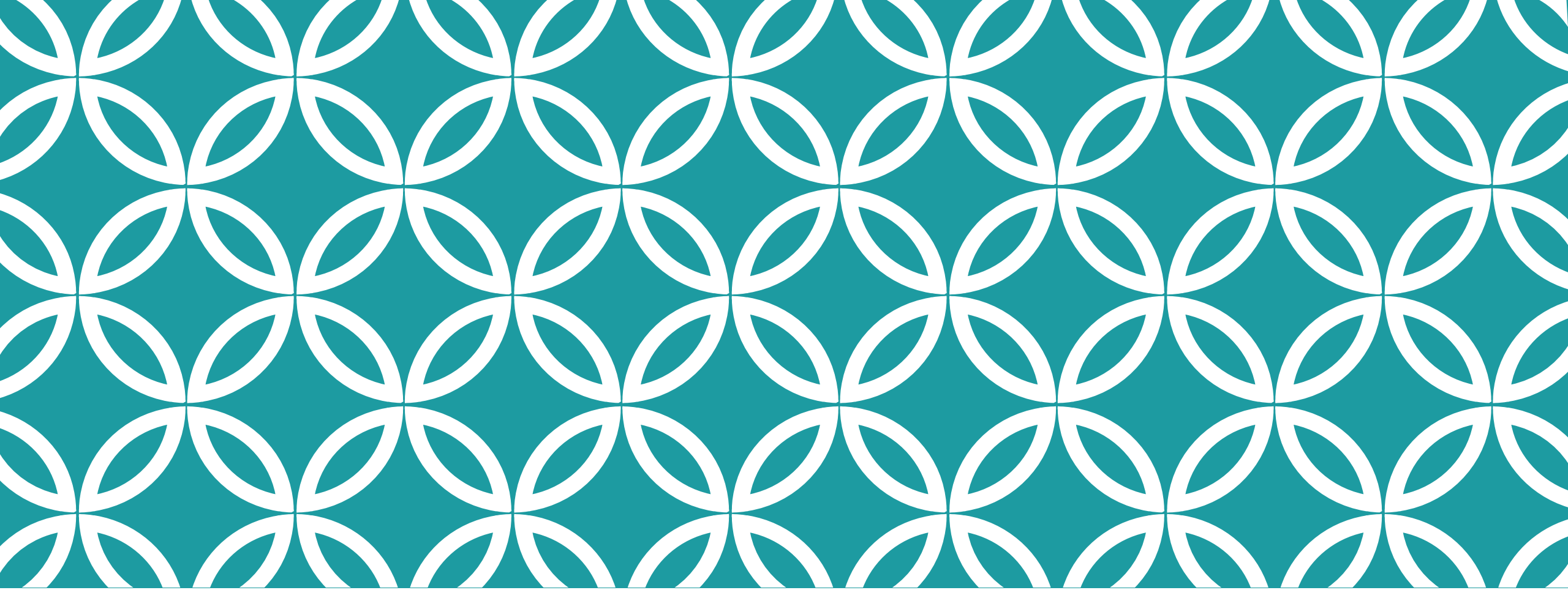
PODCAST on the book «WHY WE SLEEP» https://www.npr.org/2018/07/20/630792401



SLEEPING yes, I know some of you are against sleep. But if you are consistently getting less tan 7/8 hours a night you are basically going around semi-drunk all the time + you are on a fast track for dementia. Can't wait to read your papers in 30 years!

EXERCISE anybody can find 30 min/day to do something. Anything. I like this best first thing in the morning, since the energy boost carries over to the rest of the day.

SNACKS AND MEALS pack healthy snacks for the office you guys! fruit, nuts, a peanut butter sandwich. whatever! and water.



MAXIMIZING RESEARCH TIME

THE ACCOUNTABILITY PARADOX

- the **less important things** in your career (=**SERVICE, TEACHING**) have **built-in accountability** (e.g. showing up for class/office hours, going to a meeting, being on a committee, answering student email)

- the **most important things** (=**RESEARCH**) have **no built-in accountability** (writing, exp. big and ambitious projects)

THE ACCOUNTABILITY PARADOX

IMPORTANCE

TASK	BUILT-IN ACCOUNTABILITY
Any teaching/service task	Non-negotiable deadline and peer pressure
Submitting an abstractt/presenting a paper to a conference	(Mostly) non-negotiable deadline, peer pressure once accepted
Write up a paper for conference proceedings/multi-author volume	Somewhat negotiable deadline, peer pressure
Writing and submitting a paper to a major journal	No accountability, no peer pressure
Writing a book	No accountability or peer pressure whatsoever

OK, BUT WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT?

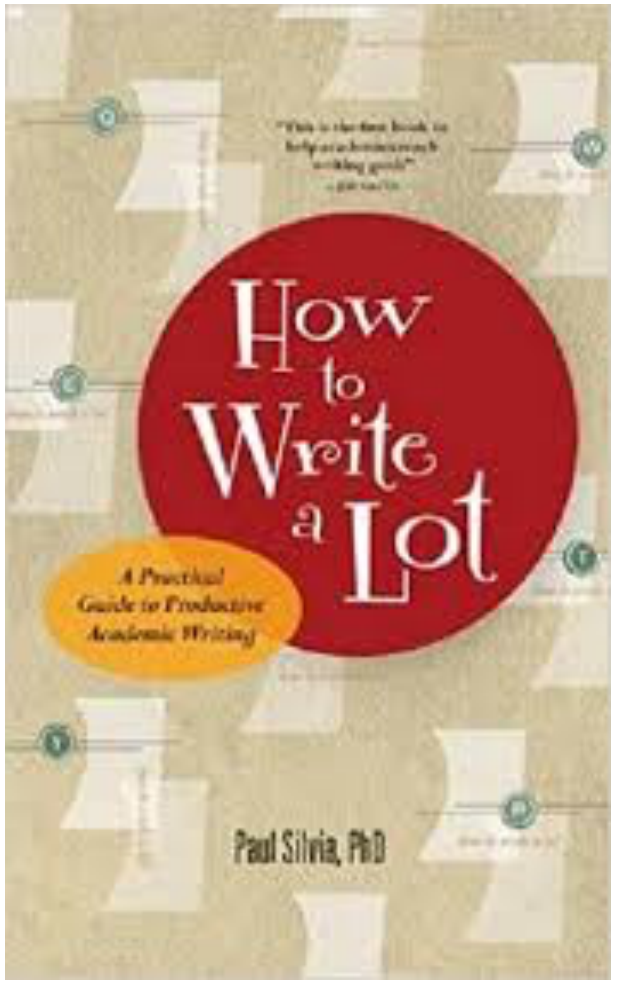
- add **PEER PRESSURE** (e.g., research groups, having co-authors, etc.)
- add **accountability** in the form of a **FIXED SCHEDULE/HABIT** (e.g., every Monday from 8-10AM it's research time)
- gradually build a sense of **SELF-EFFICACY** by successfully completing small projects (underpromise + overdeliver)
- focus on how much you **ENJOY** these tasks (getting better at something, moving towards mastery etc.)

EXTERNAL MOTIVATION

INTERNAL MOTIVATION

MAKE RESEARCH A DAILY HABIT

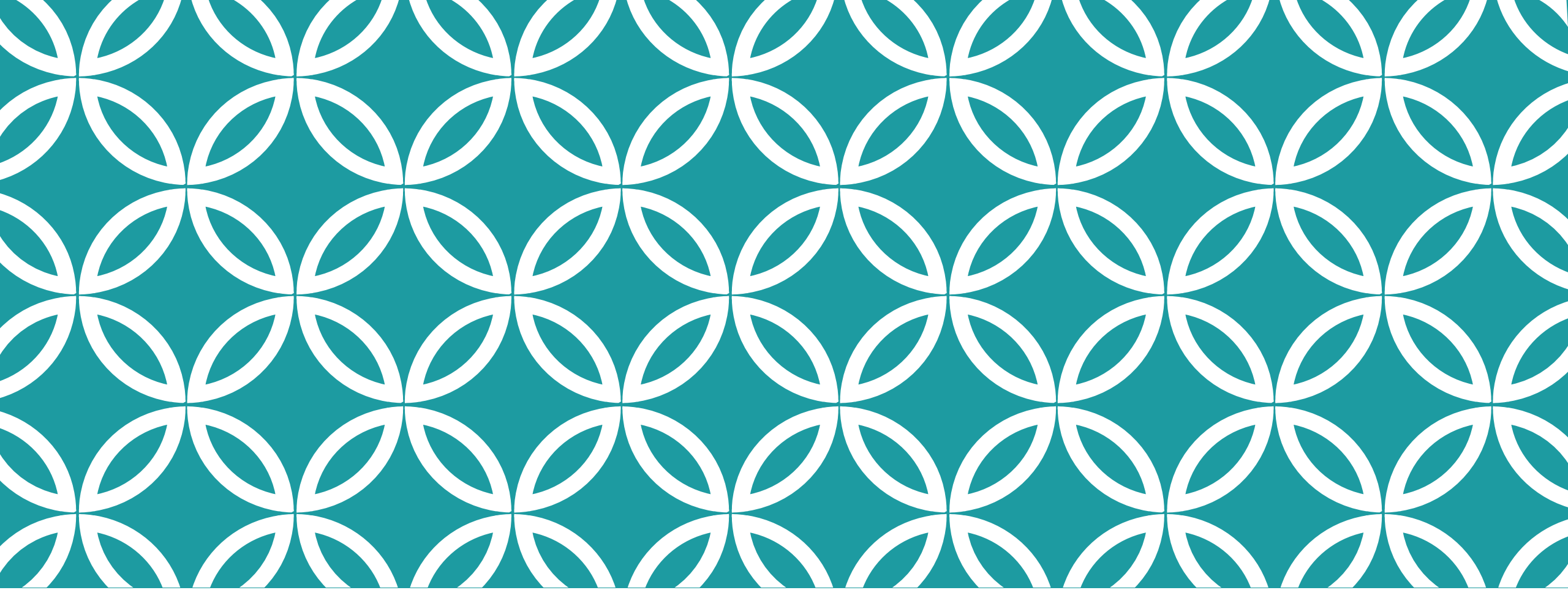
- **schedule it** in your weekly calendar the way you would a class you are teaching
- take it just as seriously as you would a class you are teaching
- **do not wait for inspiration or long uninterrupted swaths of time** (which tend to be mythological creatures/only occur at night/during the weekend/during the summer)
- get used to doing the work in 1-2 hours time blocks which you pre-schedule every week
- there's a bunch of research showing that **your input will improve BOTH QUANTITATIVELY AND QUALITATIVELY**



CREATE A RESEARCH PIPELINE

- **keep track** of where each project is along the pipeline
- try to keep **1-2 active projects** at each stage most of the time (too many is also bad!)
- have ways to **share/get feedback** at each stage (inner circle → wider circle)

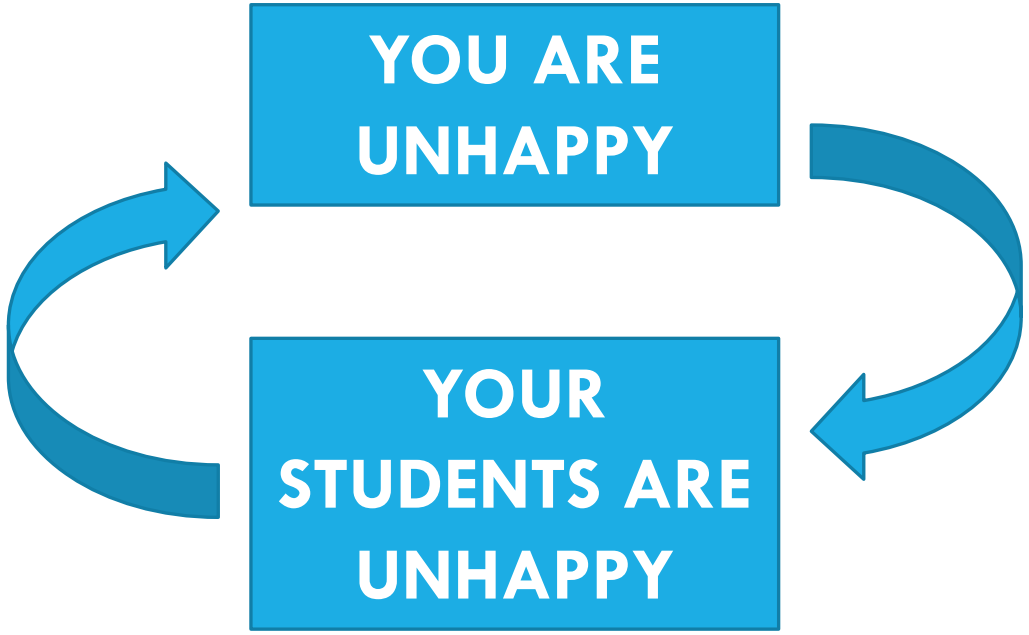
be very selective! If a project turns out to be a hopeless time-suck, **IT'S OK TO ABANDON/SHELVE IT!**



MINIMIZING TEACHING TIME (AND MAKING THE STUDENTS HAPPIER)

MOST EARLY-CAREER SCHOLARS OVERPREPARE FOR CLASSES

- Teaching prep ends up taking up a huge amount of your time
- You often have more material than you can cover → you end up rushing through it
- Your classes end up quite passive (you do all the talking because you have so much to cover)
- You teach the class at a higher level than most of your students can keep up with
- Your students don't do well in the class and your evals are not great → **you decide you need to prepare more**



WE WERE NEVER TAUGHT HOW TO TEACH

most teaching many of us have been exposed to has been a version of:

1. the teacher **synthesizes** all the stuff that you have to know about a topic
2. they **transmit the information orally** while you write it down (if you are lucky they have handouts)
3. they might **model some problem-solving skills** (e.g. translating, going through a problem set, criticizing an argument)
4. you **memorize** the information and are supposed to **reproduce** it in an exam
5. a small part of the exam might be applying the concepts to novel material (though in many cases that's **recall** as well, perhaps from a book you were assigned etc.)

FOR THE LARGE MAJORITY OF THIS,
YOU COULD JUST READ A BOOK!

+ THIS IS SUPER TIME-CONSUMING TO PUT TOGETHER
IF YOU ARE COMING UP WITH YOUR OWN MATERIALS

MOREOVER, IT DOES NOT WORK!

- it's only a good way to teach those **10% of students who would have gotten it anyway** (and would have gotten it from a book too)
- You are really **not improving their intellectual understanding** of a topic
- 90% of your students are just **superficially memorizing the info you worked SO hard to gather,** without really learning how to put it together themselves

Eric Mazur, Harvard

→ this a great way FOR YOU TO LEARN MORE about your subject, BUT NOT FOR YOUR STUDENTS

http://essentialquestions.org/video_7.lasso

WHAT YOU CAN DO INSTEAD

1. have students **READ THE MATERIALS ON THEIR OWN** (this can be the textbook, assigned readings, or your own handouts)
2. use class time to **ADDRESS AREAS OF CONFUSION** and have them **PRACTICE THE SKILLS** you want them to acquire
3. instead of talking/leading all the time, **LET STUDENTS TALK TO EACH OTHER** (students who understand the materials will be able to explain it to the students who don't)

→ this yields much better learning results
AND TAKES A LOT LESS TIME TO PREPARE!

1. HAVE THEM READ THE MATERIALS AT HOME

to make sure they actually do it, you need some **accountability**:

A SIMPLE METHOD:

- reading quizzes due the night before/at the beginning of class
- include an open question about what they found hard/confusing

A BETTER METHOD:

- **Perusall** (http://perusall.com)
- This thing is actually amazing!! (ideal especially for undergraduate classes and managing large numbers of students)

RESULTS:

- **they** do the readings and think about them
- **you** get a list of what topics they found most confusing → you can address them in class

2. USE CLASS TIME TO ADDRESS AREAS OF CONFUSION/PRACTICE THEIR SKILLS

Once you have a list of topics they struggled with, you can:

1. put together a **MINI-LECTURE** about them
2. design some **CLASS ACTIVITY/EXERCISE** where they get to practice specifically on the topics they found difficult

to make them more involved in class discussion, you can use TEAM-BASED LEARNING
= sort them in small TEAMS at the beginning of the quarter, have them always work together

CLASS ACTIVITIES CAN INCLUDE

QUESTIONS + POLLING

- ask conceptually difficult multiple choice question + POLL + have them discuss in small groups + POLL AGAIN + discuss the solution
- this can be implemented in low-tech ways (raise of hands, flashcards)
- or high tech ways (www.polleverywhere.com)

CLASS ACTIVITIES CAN INCLUDE

PROBLEM SETS /EXERCISES

- again, they can work alone at first and then discuss results with their group
- you can also have groups compete with each other to find a solution
- you can either design these yourself or just pull them from textbooks

CLASS ACTIVITIES CAN INCLUDE

WRITING EXERCISES

- i know this sounds very literary-oriented
- but you could have them **write down an argument/counterargument for some existing theory** (similar to essay questions on final exams)
- and then discuss their answers with each other/the class

RESULTS

1. you are not blabbing all the time or just reading your slides/handouts out loud
2. students are **ACTIVE** during class time (vs. watching youtube videos on their laptops)
3. even shy students get to talk to each other in their teams (this improves attendance)
4. prevents individual annoying students from taking over all class discussion
5. you are actually **IMPROVING THEIR CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING** of topics
6. STUDENTS HAVE MORE FUN!
7. **YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORK NEARLY AS HARD!**
8. **YOU GET BETTER EVALS!! (i have tried)**
9. you can brag about your teaching methodology in cover letters (active learning, team-based learning, etc.)

NAH, I'M JUST GOING TO LECTURE LIKE BEFORE

Ok, but you can at least **plan 1-2 class activities (better TEAM activities) per hour**

- This will cut down on your prep time (problem sets can take up 15-20+ min of class time each)
- Plus it will make the class a lot more fun and interactive

For graduate-level classes:

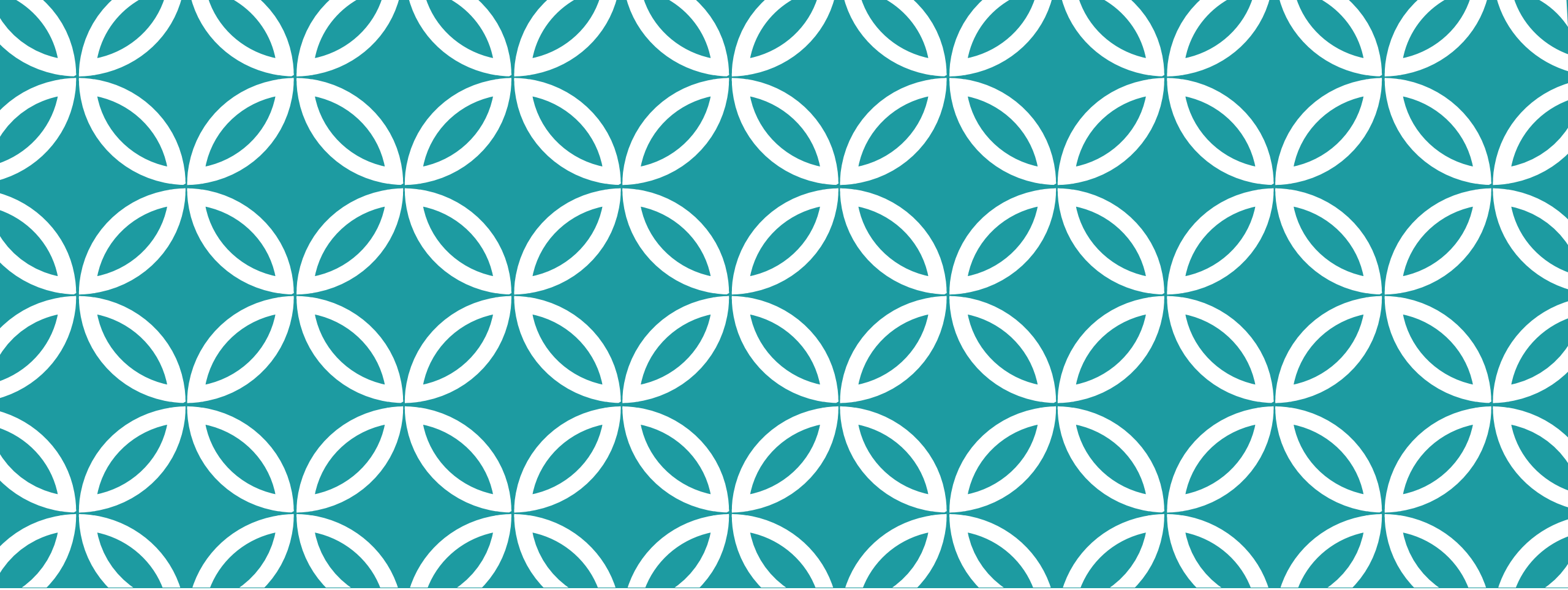
- HAVE STUDENTS PRESENT STUFF (readings, squibs, etc.)
- they will learn FAR more by making the handouts themselves than by sitting passively while you read your handouts.

A MODEL FOR AN EFFECTIVE, LOW-EFFORT GRADUATE SEMINAR

this is from a TAM class we did in Leiden 10 years ago with Ronny Boogaart.

I learned A LOT and the lecturer wasn't doing ANYTHING (well, relatively speaking)!

1. make a topic calendar with readings (2-3 medium-sized papers per meeting)
2. each meeting, **one student is responsible for presenting a critical overview of the literature**
3. each meeting, **all the other students have to turn in a squib** in which they apply that week's theoretical approaches to a topic/language they know
4. the **instructor moderates class discussion** between the students



OK, I'M BASICALLY DONE

SUMMING IT UP

1. **Try fixed schedule productivity** (limit the total number of working hours) + track your time usage
2. manage your focus + energy (**work in concentrated blocks** + make waves)
3. **prioritize RESEARCH** over the rest as much as possible, and **build it into your daily schedule**
4. set **MOST IMPORTANT GOALS (research/teaching/service)** for each week, and try to spend most of your time in the **IMPORTANT/NON URGENT QUADRANT**
5. minimize teaching preparation time by using **ACTIVE LEARNING (=make the students do the work!).**