

# Your Next Great Idea



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What do great ideas look like?

# The 4-Stage Creative Process

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- Preparation
- Incubation
- Illumination
- Verification

Wallas, *The Art of Thought*, 1926

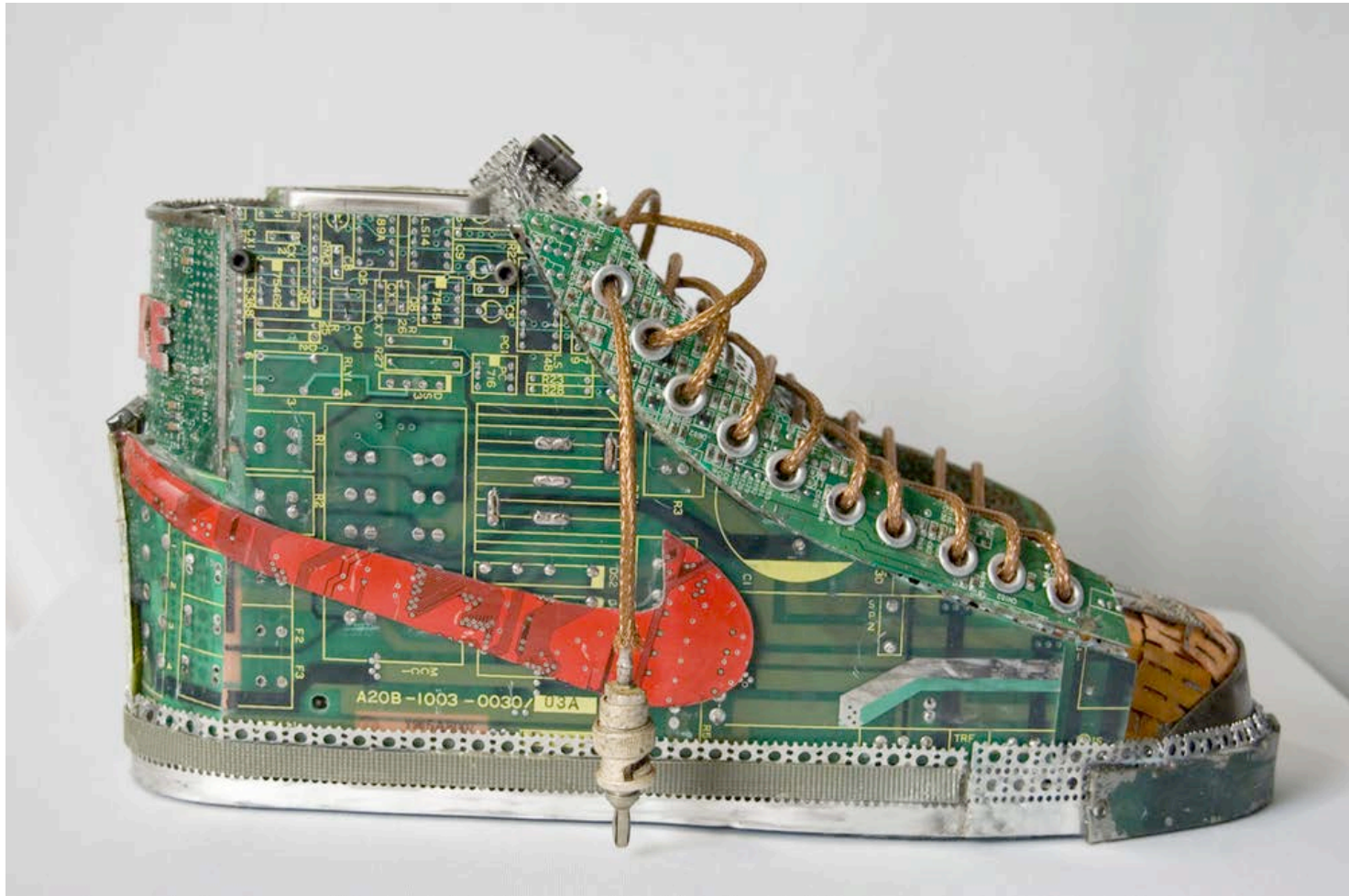
What do great ideas look like?

[Great creative minds] think like  
artists and work like accountants.

-David Brooks

# Thinking like an artist

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# Stage 1: Preparation

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Depth



[istockphoto.com](https://www.istockphoto.com)

Breadth



[seashells.com](https://www.seashells.com)

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# Stage 1: Preparation

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## Depth

- Keeping eye on new literature
  - Emailed tables of contents/RSS feeds
  - PubMed/Google Scholar alerts
- Read most important articles
  - Browzine/Read by QxMD (apps)
  - “My Research Summaries”

## Breadth

- Make time to learn about things that interest you
  - Fall down rabbit holes
  - Find new podcasts
  - Read things outside your focus



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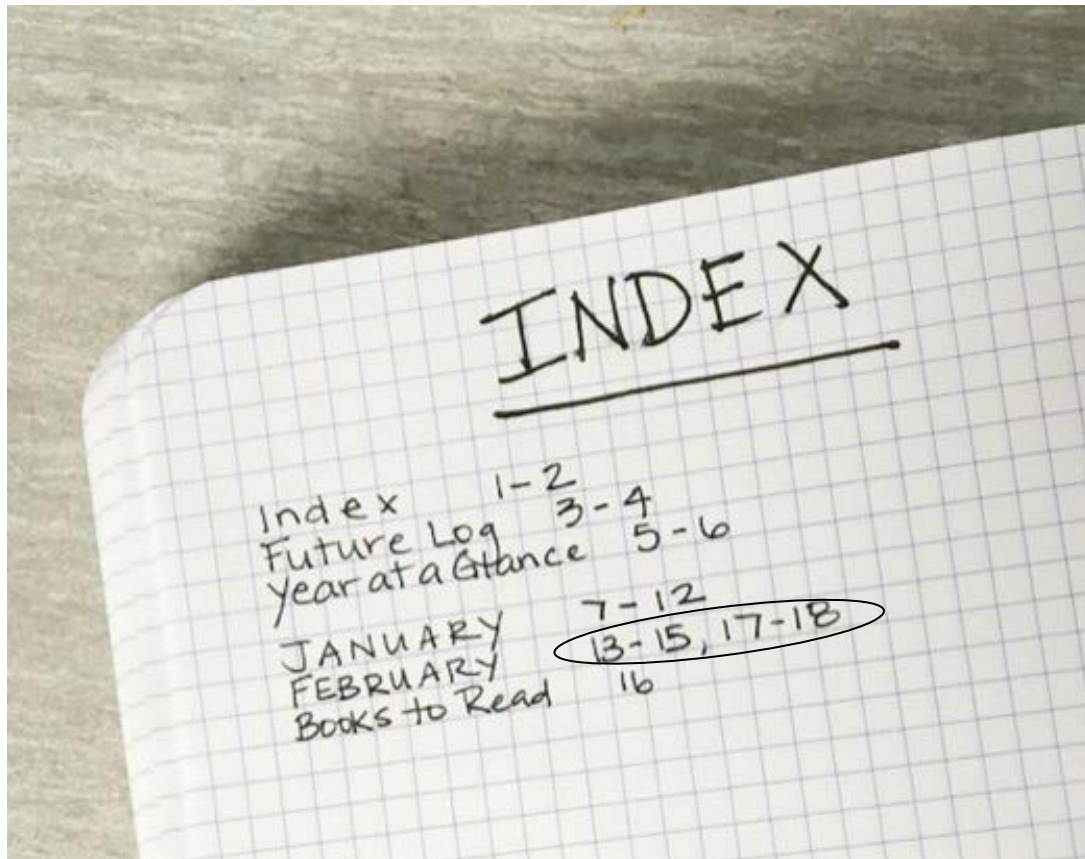
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## Capturing interesting ideas

- Bullet journal (adapted)
- Evernote/DevonThink

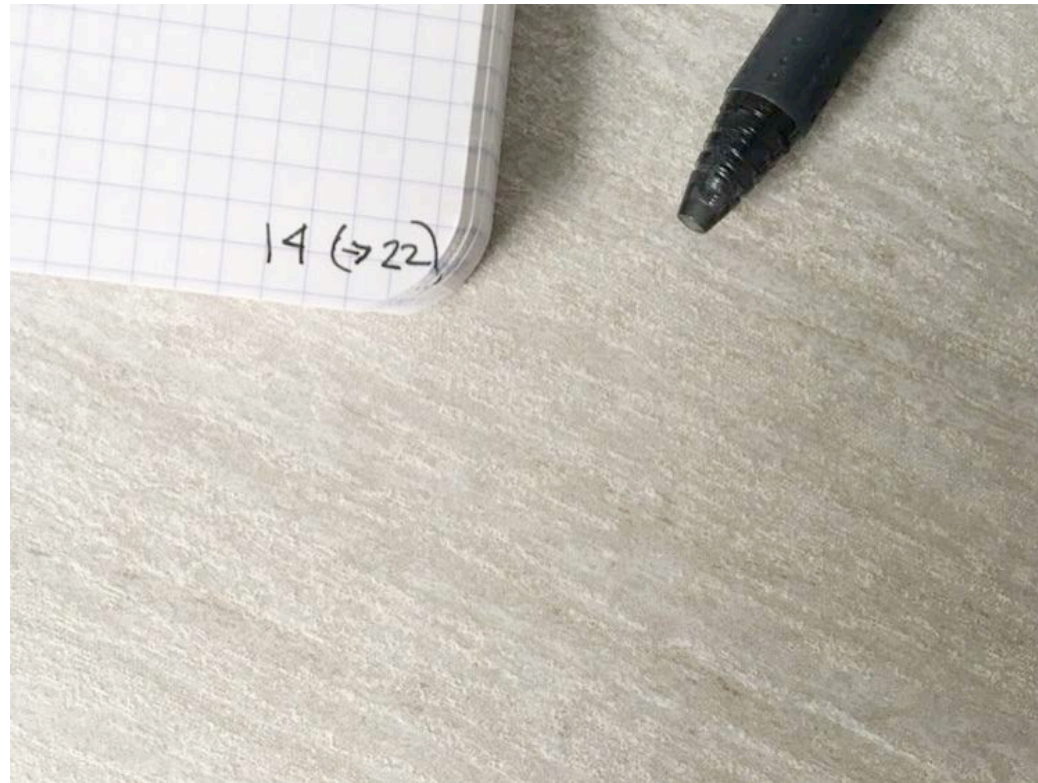
# Adapted bullet journal

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# Stage 2: Incubation

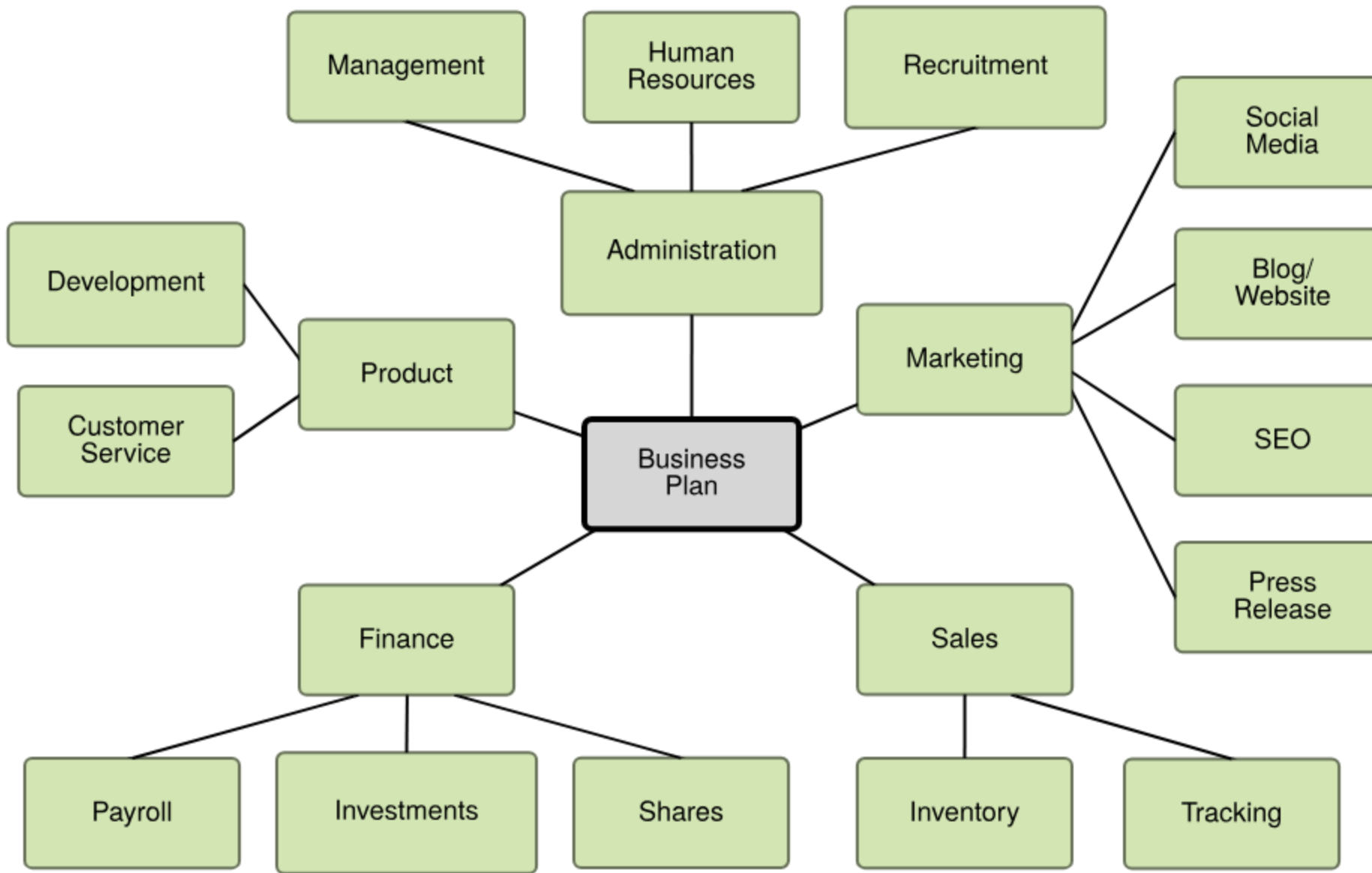
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- ❑ Shutdown ritual
- ❑ Sleep
- ❑ Meditate
- ❑ Exercise

# Stage 3: Illumination

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- Often a passive process
- Options for actively nudging your creative brain
  - Occupy yourself physically and focus on problem
  - Kitchen sink thinking
  - Mind mapping



# Stage 4: Verification

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Does this resonate? What other ideas do you have that go with these concepts?

# Exercise

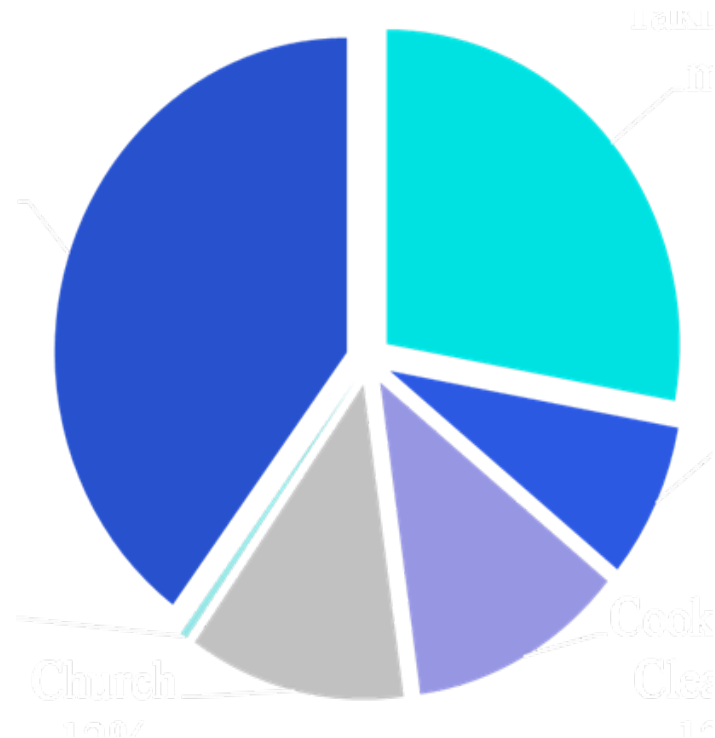
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- Take a moment to reflect on the last few work days
- On the sheet provided please list the tasks/roles that fill your typical day
  - Clinical
  - Team meetings
  - Supervision
  - Organizing
  - Administration
  - Email etc.

# Exercise

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- Apportion your pie based on the time spent daily on each task



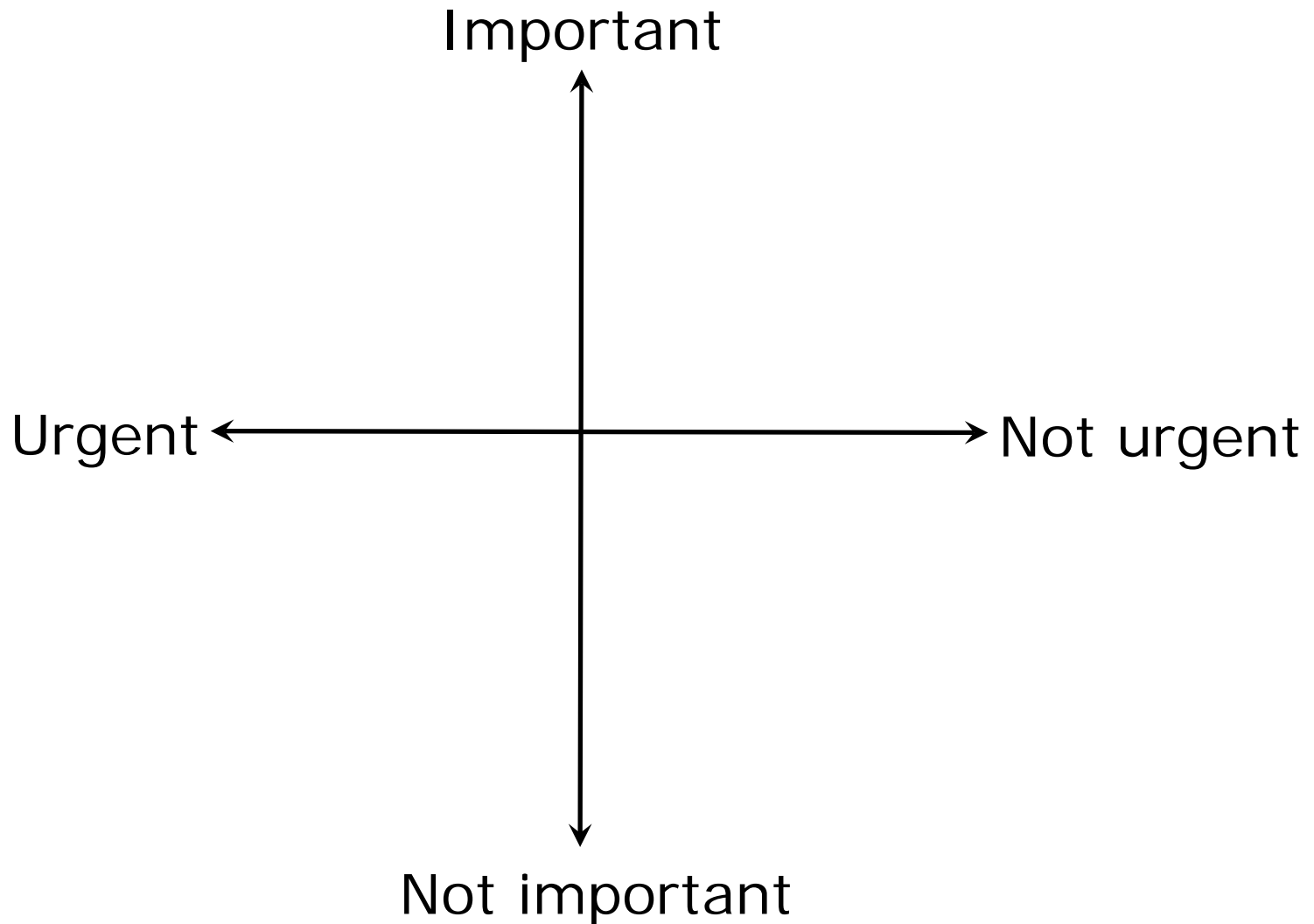
# Group Reflection

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- ❑ What was the exercise like for you? Was it difficult?
- ❑ Did you notice anything that surprised you about how you spend your time?
- ❑ Did you protect any time for deep thinking or to allow idea generation?
- ❑ Are you satisfied with your pie?
- ❑ Is there anything you'd like to change about how you spend your time?

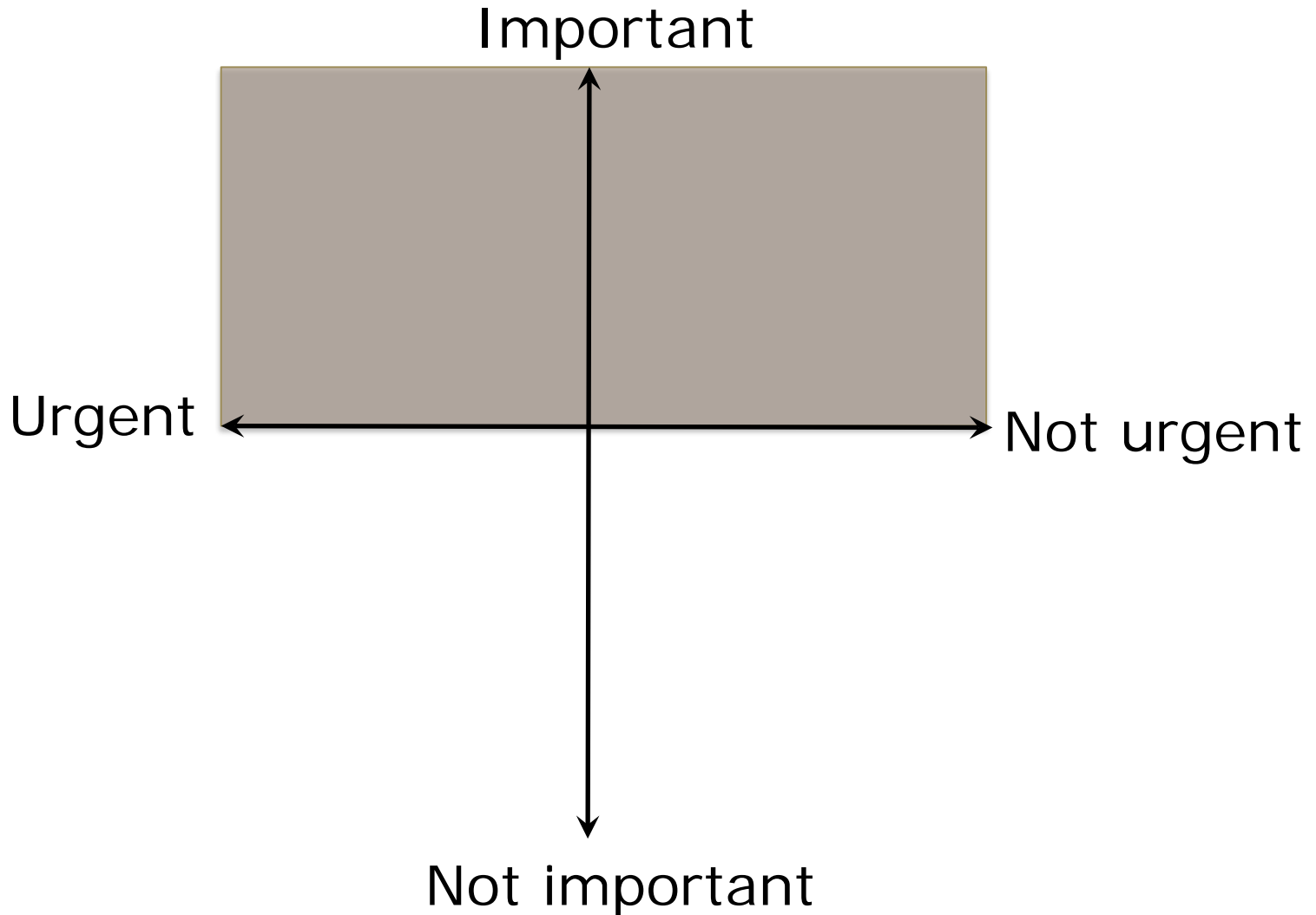
# Eisenhower quadrants

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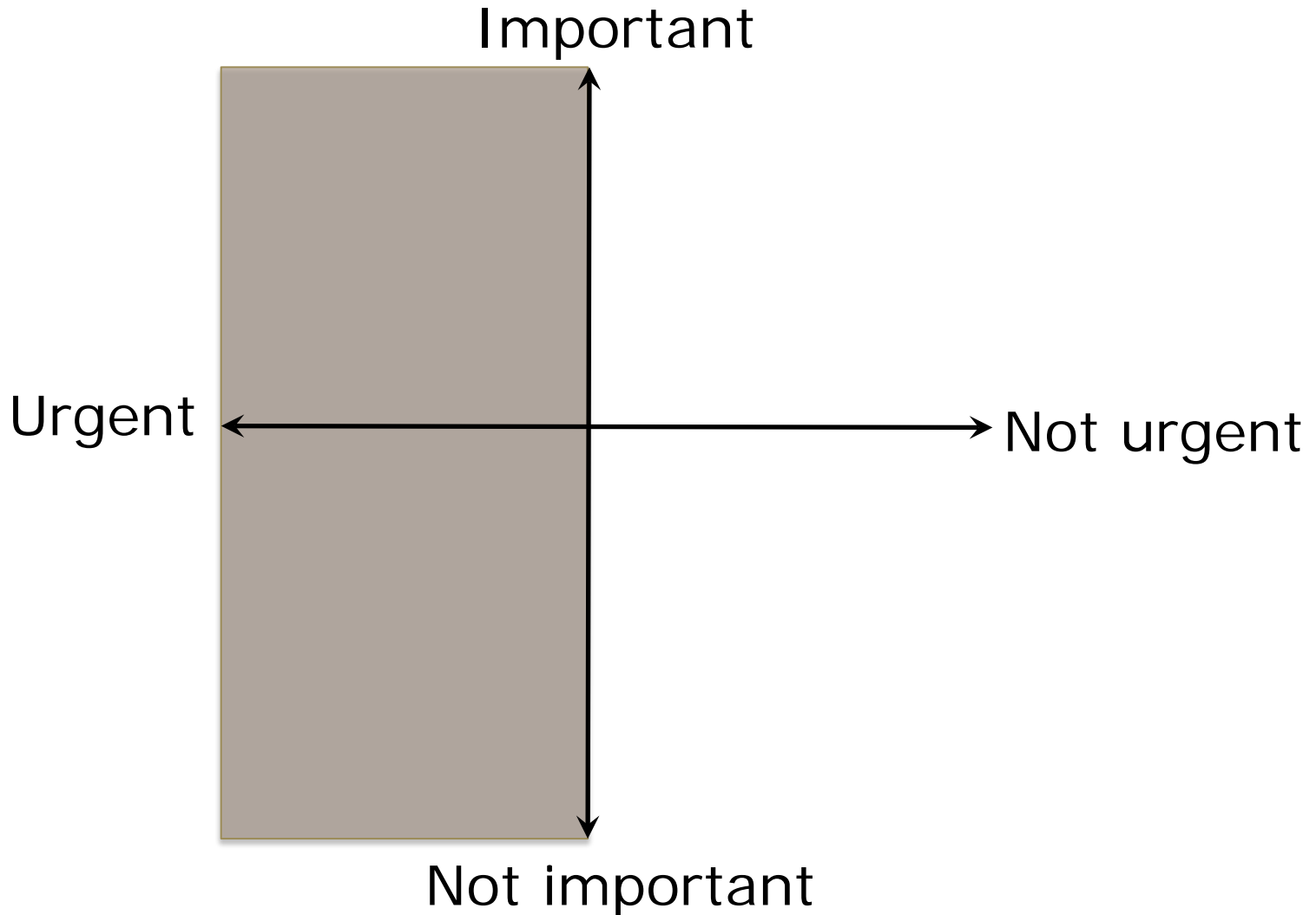
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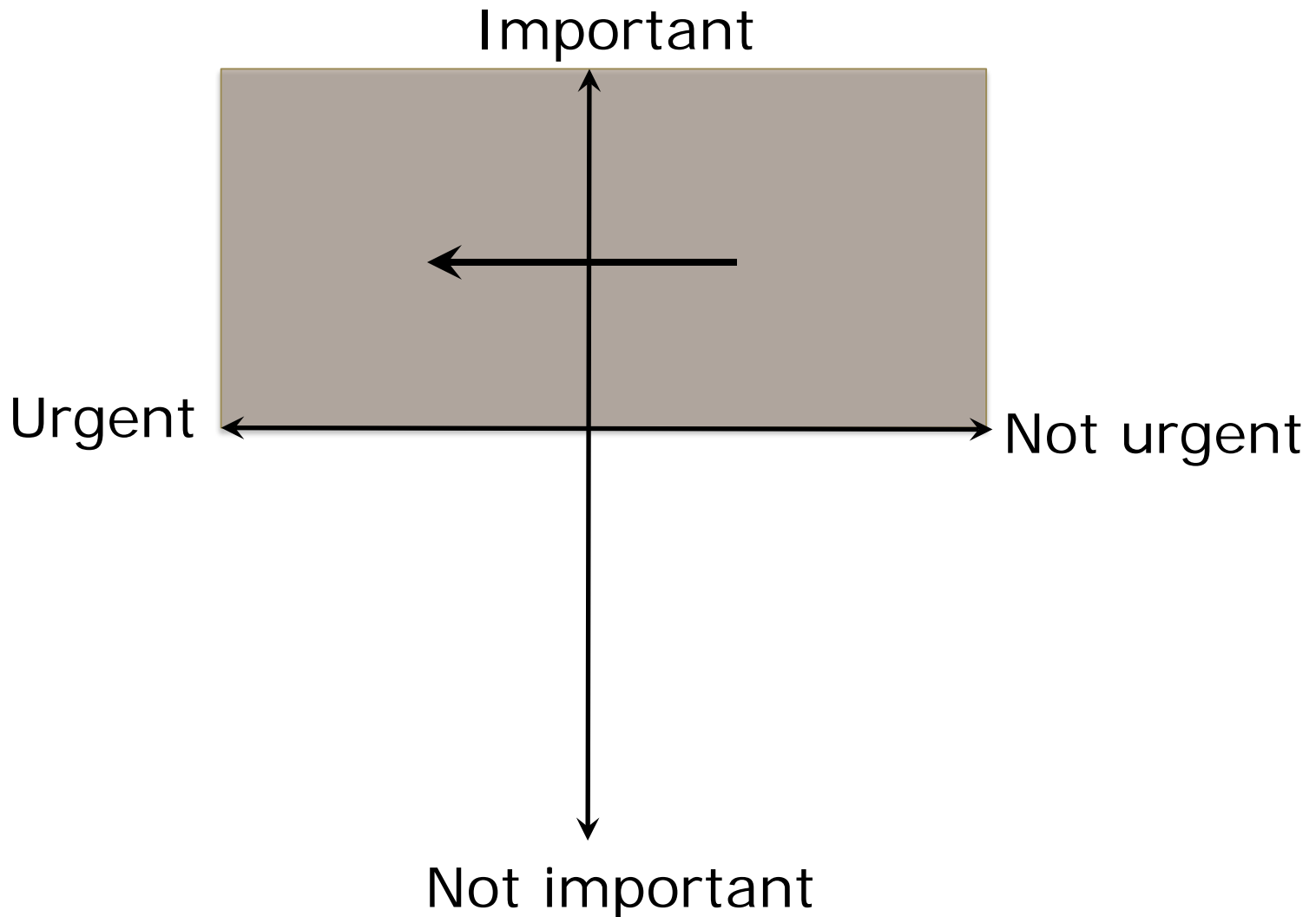
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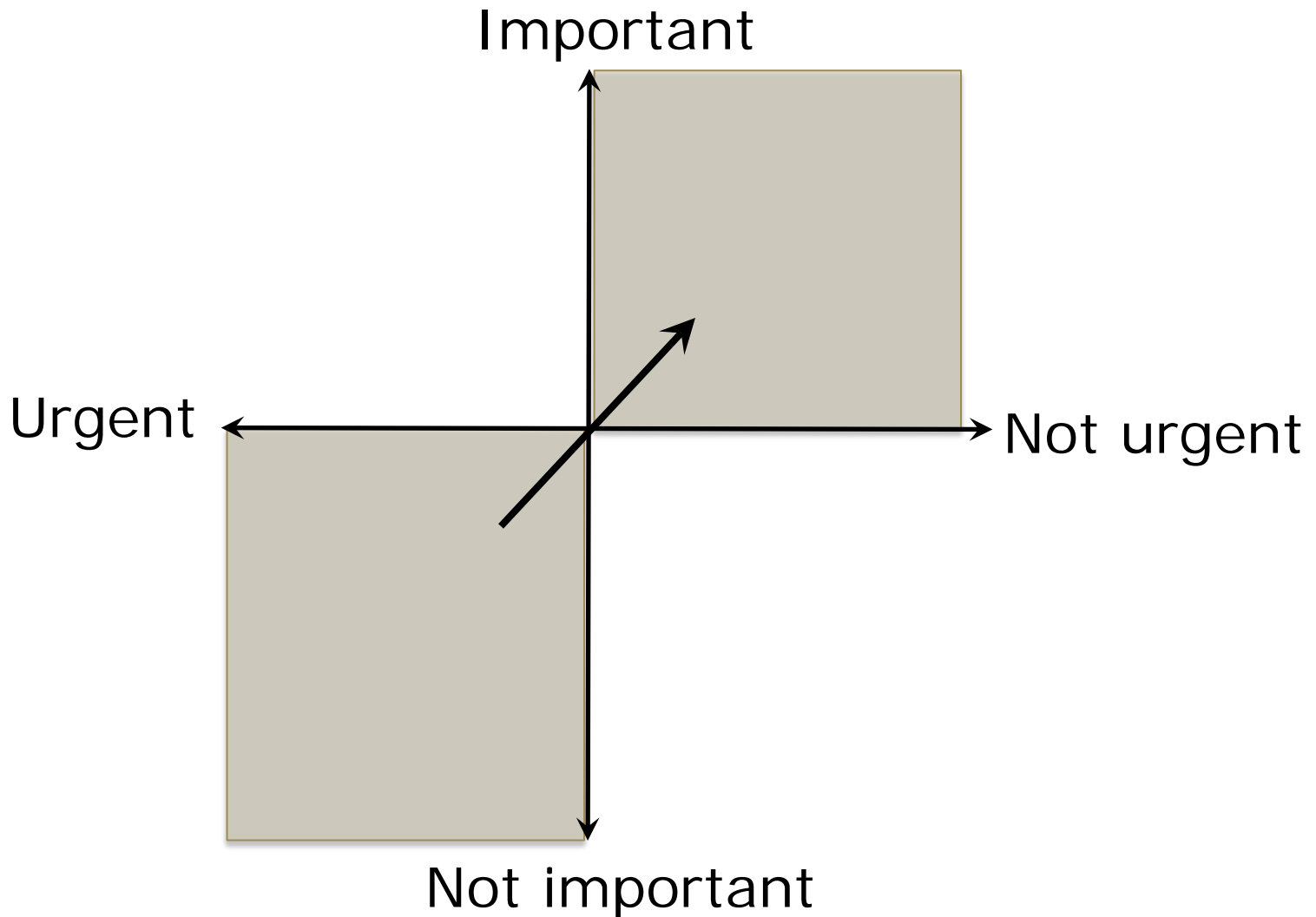
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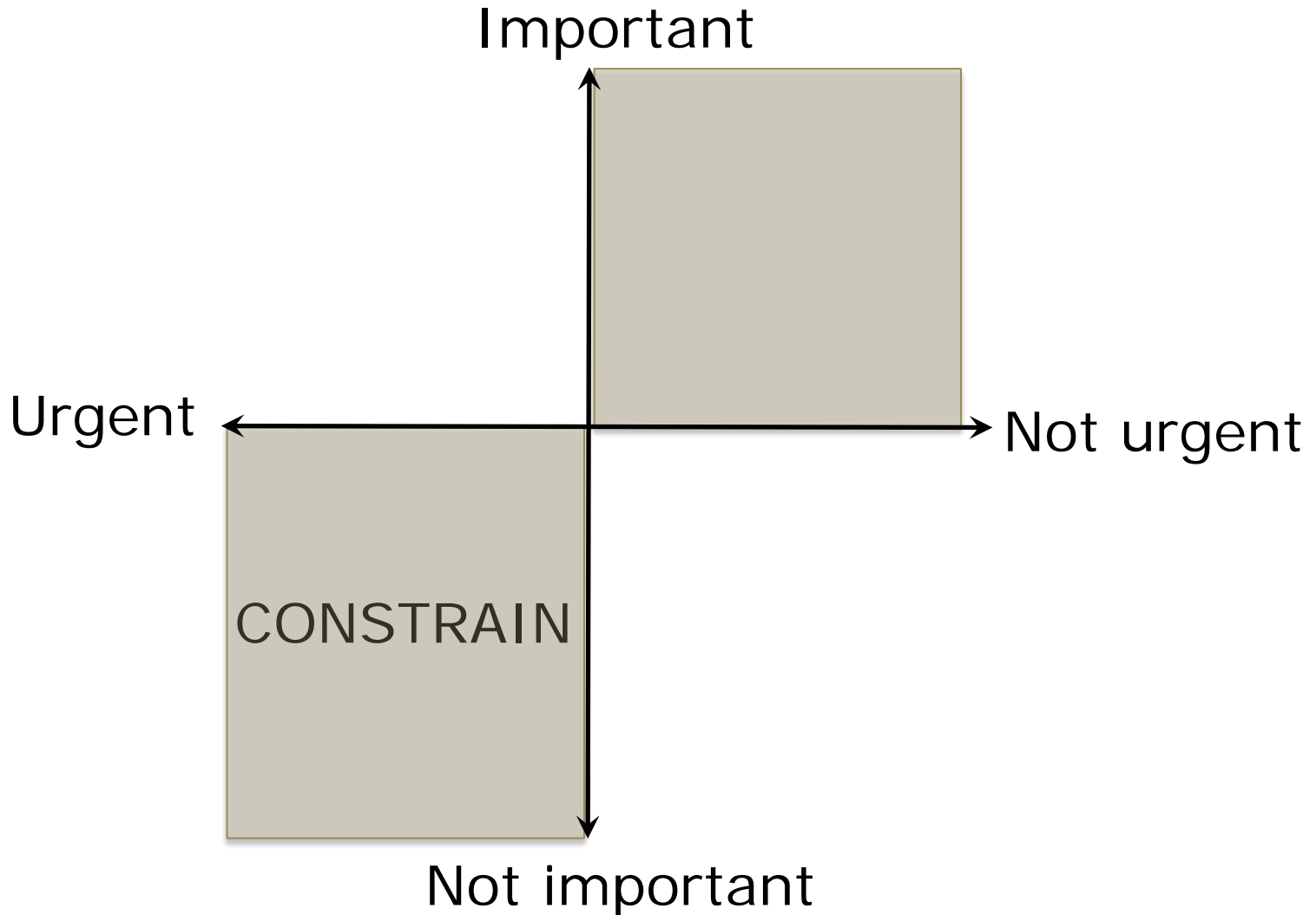
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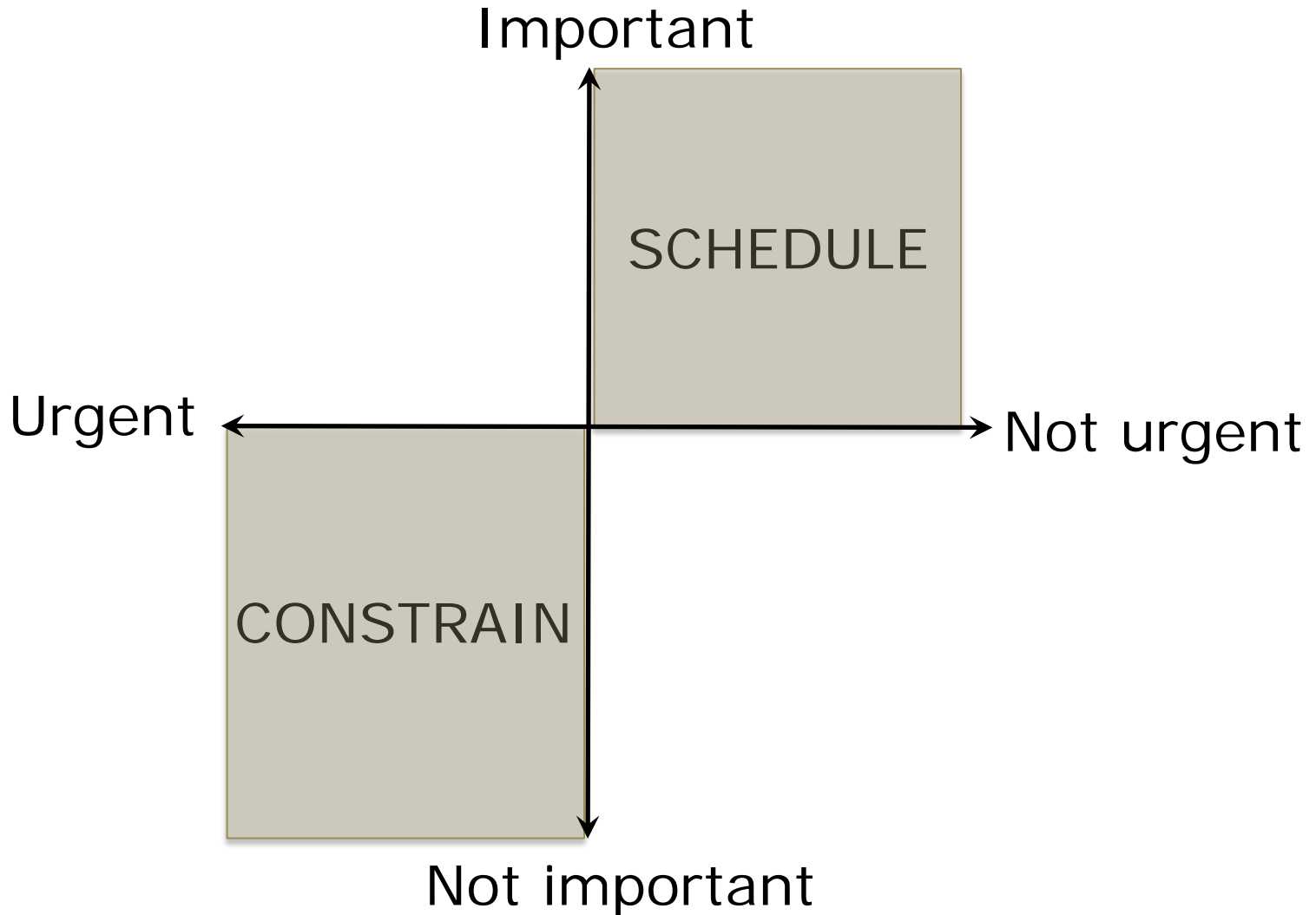
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# Eisenhower quadrants

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# Working like an accountant

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- ❑ Freeing up bandwidth
- ❑ Getting started
- ❑ Staying motivated

# Freeing up bandwidth

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- Schedule time for the not urgent
  - Categorical scheduling: protect your productive time windows
- Constrain administrative tasks
  - Learn to delegate (30-to-1 rule, compound interest)
  - Check email intentionally
  - System to collect to-dos
    - Academic athlete article
    - Getting Things Done
    - Inbox Zero

# Getting Things Done

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- #1: Nagging feeling of forgetting something
  - Keep nothing in your head
- #2: Getting sidetracked
  - Do now anything taking <2 min
  - If >2 min, add to your to-do list
- #3: Just reading your to-do list is exhausting
  - To-dos are single actionable tasks
  - Create a master project list—use it to generate your to-do list—review it regularly

# Inbox Zero

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## □ New email:

- Response today or tomorrow—stays in inbox
- Needs response sometime—to-do folder
- Need information later—file it

# Inbox Zero

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- Inbox ONLY for new + urgent/important
- The cleaning process:
  - Everything older than X months goes into “Old” folder
  - Everything newer than X months goes into “Temp” folder
    - Sort by sender and delete/categorize until “Temp” empty
- Not about organizing, about categorizing:
  - Folder for to-dos
  - Folder(s) for emails you may need later (broad and discrete categories—clinical/research/teaching/admin/reference)
- Clean PRN



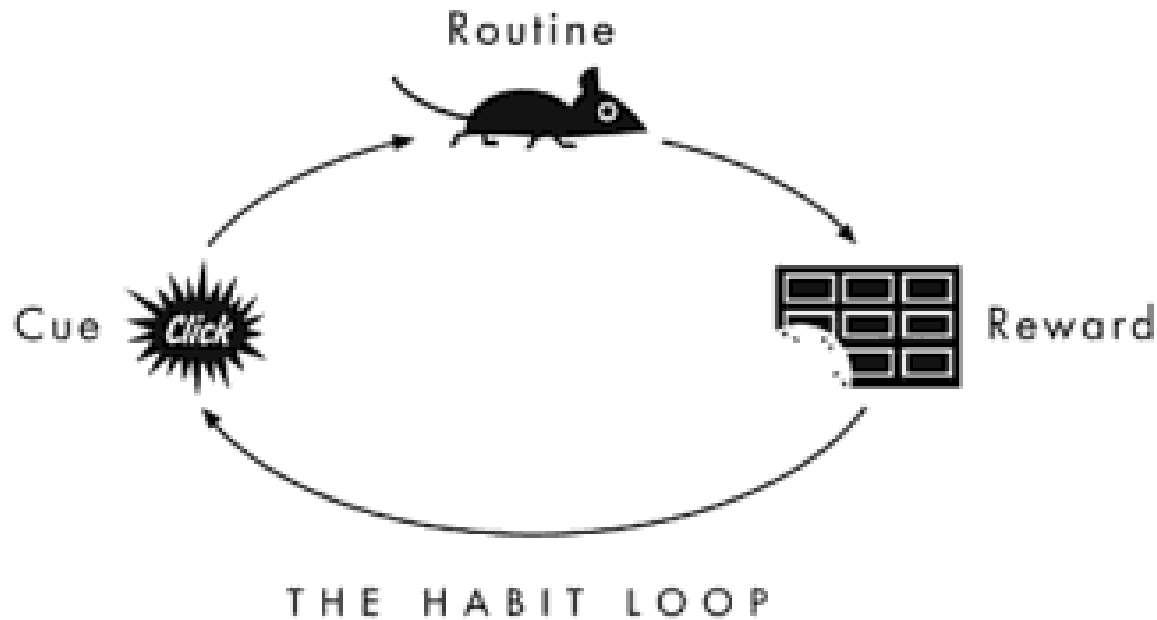
# Tricks for getting started

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- Identifying your first task
  - Ivy Lee method
  - Eating the frog
- Build a routine that leads you into being productive

# Building habits

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*The Power of Habit, Charles Duhigg*

- ❑ Harness existing habit loops
- ❑ Focus on building one (tiny) habit at a time
- ❑ “Never miss twice in a row”

# Tricks for getting started

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- Identifying your first task
  - Ivy Lee method
  - Eating the frog
- Build a routine that leads you into being productive
- The blank page
  - Pomodoro technique
  - Write one sentence
  - Self-bribery
- When all else fails
  - Productive procrastination

# Staying motivated

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- Create artificial deadlines
  - High intensity interval training corollary
  - Social pressure (e.g., FacultyDiversity.com, make a bet)
- Identify and track metrics to celebrate small wins
  - Daily journal
  - Stages of publication chart
  - Paperclips/Sticker chart

Does this resonate? What other ideas do you have that go with these concepts?

# Action Plan

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- What are your takeaways from today?
- How are you going to implement them into your workflow?

# Brendan's Action Plan

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## □ **My goal:**

Develop habits to facilitate idea generation

## □ **Strategies I want to adopt:**

eat the frog

## □ **How I will implement my favorite idea:**

On arrival to office in morning I will think about and complete one task that is weighing me down

### **Potential barriers:**

- “Urgent” messages, booking meetings first thing in the morning