

Make the
most of your
thesis-writing
time!

A work in progress, this presentation contains practical tips about **time**, as well as suggestions, strategies, and activities for **developing a mindset** that will help you both **thrive** and be **productive** during your thesis-writing journey.

(for additional context on undeveloped slides,
contact [Kristen Brookes](#))

Mindset and Wellness

- Prioritize thesis work--set aside time for thesis work as if it is a class that has projects due throughout the semester
- Separate work time from “play” time
- Maintain your well of creativity (artist’s dates, for example)
- Use the notion of “dates of completion” rather than deadlines
- Map out your figurative path of completion
- Try to maintain the joy you take in your project. If you notice it is waning, make time to recover it.
- Work in community in the way that works best for you.
- Prioritize mental and physical wellness. Exercise. Get sleep. Eat well. Have fun. Connect with people who give you energy or help you restore yourself.
- Know your resources and *use* them. Be in conversation with others about your project and your processes.

Where's the
joy?

Why did you choose this specific project?

What are you most excited about learning or doing?

Why is this project important?

Why does it matter to you?

When your joy is waning, what, specifically, will help you recover it?



Routines and Non-Negotiables

Motivation and Accountability

Backwards Planning

Rewards (and Consequences?)

Community

Use a log to set and track goals,
reflect on where you've been,
where you're going, what works best
for you

Dates of
Completion

-Sark, *Living
Juicy*

J a n u A R Y 30
Completion in Addition to Finishing



the
DEAD
Lines

I like to call Finishing
Completing: it feels more round
and whole and friendly.
Consequently, I call deadlines
"Completion Dates".

I can more easily accept the need
to complete what I begin when
it feels like my choice to do so,
not an outer imposed schedule,
which is what I think of when
I hear the word deadline.

I'm also experimenting with letting go of projects that
don't feel nourishing. That's a completion of another
kind - and an important one.

...I AM learning how to complete promises to myself...

F e B R U A R Y 1
n u r t u r e : completion. suspend JUDGMENT

Dates of Completion with Kristen

:-)

- "Deadline" sounds like the finish line--the end of a competitive race--and it also has the word "dead" in it, which isn't very inspiring. Deadlines are also usually imposed from the outside, and even if they are self-imposed, they are still *impositions*.
- "Completion," on the other hand, suggests a creative process, directed at *making* something; the aim is to bring to fruition all the hard work you have done, to feel the satisfaction of finishing a project that is important to you, that is *yours*.
- At this point in your thesis project, you will probably find it useful to start with that final date of completion and work backwards, setting smaller dates of completion. Or even thinking in terms of what tasks you will complete each day.



**Reward
yourself!!!**

- When you do complete a task you have set for yourself, recognize it, and reward yourself.
- Find that bar of chocolate you stockpiled and savor it with a really good cup of coffee.
- Reach out to a friend or relative you haven't talked with for a long time.
- Zoomba in your room.
- Draw. Play a musical instrument.
- Have an impromptu dance party (on Zoom, in your dorm, or on the quad).
- If you can, go outside and throw a frisbee, bounce a ball, or roll down a hill. Or just look at the sky and sing a joyous song, even if just quietly to yourself.

Envision your path of completion!

Envision Your Path of Completion

- You might find it helpful to envision your path of completion, so you can see, metaphorically, how you are going to reach your destination. You can do this envisioning purely as a mental activity, but it might be fun and relaxing (and provide you a visual for later) to actually draw out your path, using crayons, colored pencils, markers, or whatever you can get your hands on.
- You could do this as a planned, renewing, creative break; at the end of a work session; or when you feel stuck and are having trouble seeing your way forward.

Here are some questions to consider as you visualize your path of completion:

- What does your path of completion look like? It is straight, or is it full of twists and turns? What is the terrain like? Are there steep uphill? Are there gradual downhill? Is there a creek running along the path? Are there cacti off to the side?
- Who is along the sidelines, cheering you on your way, helping you to stay on the path and keep moving forward, and offering first-aid when you are worn out and blistered?
- Who or what are the obstacles in your path, and how can you avoid or get past them?
- Where are the places for rest, replenishment, and reflection? What and/or who will you find there?
- What does the end of your journey look like? What awaits you? How will you feel when you get there? Who will be there with you?

Have fun! And if you would like to, please share your path (in words or images) to inspire others and so that others may cheer you on your way.

SMART goals

S
M
A
R
T

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time-Bound

By noon today, I will read this article, annotate while reading, and write a summary of it.

Spend no more than 90 minutes cleaning up data. Focus only on the third and fourth columns.

Find ten journal articles that refer to parole reform from the last ten years. Add them to Zotero and decide what order to read them in.

Links to handouts

- [Pomodoro Guide](#)
- [Conditions for Productivity](#)
- [Thesis Log](#)
- [Summer Research Table Jamboard](#)