

The Shutdown Guide – Workbook

Practical tools to stop living in always-on mode



Name: _____


Welcome to The Shutdown Guide Workbook

This workbook is your practical companion for the 4 video modules of The Shutdown Guide. There's no abstract theory here – just direct tools for you to make real decisions and track concrete changes in your daily life as a remote worker.

There's no perfection in this process. The goal isn't impeccable performance, but sustainable consistency. You are building a new pattern of behavior, not proving anything to anyone. Every small repeated action is worth more than grand promises never fulfilled.

How to use this material: watch each video module and then fill out the corresponding pages in this workbook. You don't need to do everything at once. In fact, we recommend you start with Module 2 – the shutdown ritual – and practice for 14 days before adding other layers. Real change happens in small, consistent steps, not in grand revolutions that last three days.

This is a living working document. You can cross out, rewrite, adapt. What matters is that it serves you in building healthy digital boundaries and reclaiming your evenings and weekends without guilt.

 **Important:** You don't have to fill out everything at once. Start with Module 2 (the shutdown ritual), run it for 14 days, then adjust. Small wins compound into life-changing patterns.

Self-Audit: Is This You?

Before you start building new habits, it's important to understand where you are now. This self-assessment isn't a judgment – it's just an honest snapshot of your current patterns. Check everything that feels true for you in the last 7 to 14 days.

- **I check work messages after 9pm at least three times a week**

That "quick" scroll on Slack before bed that turns into 20 minutes responding to things.

- **I have woken up at night thinking about work**

You wake up at 3 AM remembering an email or worrying about a deadline.

- **I feel guilty when I'm not available for my team**

The feeling that you're abandoning people if you don't respond immediately.

- **I often 'just quickly' check Slack and then lose 15–30 minutes**

A quick glance turns into a full conversation, turns into three different threads.

- **I struggle to remember when I last had an evening truly offline**

When was the last time you spent an entire evening without thinking about work?

- **I keep my work apps on the home screen of my phone**

Slack, email, Teams – all just a tap away, all the time.

- **I sometimes wake up tired even after a full night of sleep**

Your body slept, but your mind never completely shut down.

- **I feel like I'm always behind, even when I'm working a lot**

The persistent feeling that you've never done enough, no matter how many hours you've worked.

- **I often reply to messages immediately, even when I'm not really available**

You reply at dinner, at the gym, during conversations with people you love.

- **I worry that if I disconnect, something important will break**

The constant fear that everything will fall apart if you're not always present.

If you checked 4 or more boxes, you are exactly who this guide was created for. You are not alone, and there is a better way.

Design Your 5-Minute Shutdown Ritual

This is the heart of the entire system. You will choose a fixed shutdown time and repeat the same sequence every workday. It's not about being perfect – it's about creating a new neurological pattern through consistent repetition.

The shutdown ritual works because it teaches your brain that there is a clear moment when work ends. Without this ritual, you remain in always-on mode indefinitely, and your nervous system never receives the signal to slow down. With the ritual, you create a conscious transition between work and personal life.

1

Review tomorrow's tasks

This gets tasks out of your head and into a reliable system.

What tool will you use? (Notion, Todoist, paper, etc.)

2

Set status on Slack/Teams

Clear communication about your availability protects both you and your team.

My end-of-day status text:

3

Activate email auto-reply

Establishes realistic expectations for those sending messages after hours.

My auto-reply message (short):

4

Block 'Offline' time in calendar

Visually protects your personal time and prevents last-minute meetings.

Name of the event:

5

Physical shutdown

A physical gesture that tangibly marks the end of the workday.

What will I do? (Close laptop, put phone in another room, etc.)

My shutdown time: _____ pm (example: 5:50 pm)

Same time. Same sequence. Every weekday. This is the formula. The magic is in repetition, not complexity.

Digital Boundaries Plan

Your nervous system wasn't designed for hundreds of random notifications a day. Each ping activates your alert system, releasing cortisol and fragmenting your attention. Use this page to define how and when you interact with work tools – intentionally, not reactively.

Digital boundaries aren't about being inaccessible. They're about creating predictability for you and your team. When people know when you'll be available, they stop expecting instant replies all the time. And you stop living in permanent emergency mode.

My Check-In Windows

Define two times a day where you process messages with focus.

Window 1 (example: 11:00 am):

Window 2 (example: 3:00 pm):

Outside these windows, Slack/email stay closed. You work, you don't wait for messages.

Notifications I'm Turning Off

On my laptop/desktop:

- Slack notifications
- Email pop-ups
- Teams notifications
- Other tools: _____

On my phone:

- Slack notifications
- Email notifications
- Calendar alerts (non-critical)
- Other apps: _____

Where I Will Hide Work Apps on My Phone

Remove work apps from your home screen. Put them in a folder, on a secondary screen – anywhere that requires intention to access.

Work apps location (folder + screen):

New personal rule for evenings/weekends:

Communication Scripts: Status & Auto-Reply

You don't need to reinvent the wheel. Below are professional scripts you can copy word-for-word or adapt to your style. The goal is clarity and professionalism – communicating your boundaries respectfully but firmly.

Many people avoid setting up auto-replies because they think it will seem rude or arrogant. In fact, the opposite is true: you are being transparent about your expectations and helping people better plan their own communications. It's a service, not an offense.

Slack / Teams Status

"Offline for the day. Back at 9:00 am. I'll respond during business hours."

My version:

Email Auto-Reply (Short)

"Thanks for your message. I'm currently offline and will respond during business hours. If this is truly time-sensitive, please include 'URGENT' in the subject line."

My version:

Email Auto-Reply (Slightly Longer)

"Thanks for reaching out. I'm currently offline and not monitoring email. I'll respond during business hours. If this is truly urgent, please include 'URGENT' in the subject line or contact me through the agreed emergency channel."

My version:

Handling Pushback Calmly

Sometimes people react negatively when you set boundaries – not because you're wrong, but because they're not used to it. Prepare your responses in advance so you're not caught off guard and end up giving in due to discomfort.

Most objections aren't about you. They're about the other person's own dysfunctional relationship with work. When someone criticizes your boundaries, it's usually because their own non-existent boundaries are being exposed by contrast. You don't need to convince anyone – just hold your ground calmly and clearly.

1

Pushback: "Must be nice to log off at 6."

Your response: *"Honestly, I noticed that if I don't have a clear shutdown, my daytime work gets worse. This routine helps me stay sharp and avoid burnout, so it actually helps the team."*

My version:

2

Pushback: "We're all busy, you know."

Your response: *"I know, and that's exactly why I'm putting structure in place. It helps me protect my focus so I can deliver better work during the hours I'm online."*

My version:

3

Pushback: "What if something urgent happens?"

Your response: *"If something is truly urgent, we can use [channel] as the escalation path. That way we don't need to live in Slack 24/7, but real emergencies are still covered."*

My version:

14-Day Implementation Tracker

For the next 14 days, mark down what you actually did. No judgment. This isn't a performance review—it's data collection on your real patterns. Being honest here is infinitely more valuable than pretending you're doing perfectly.

You're going to fail some days. Everyone does. What matters is getting back on track the next day. Consistency doesn't mean perfection—it means keeping at it even when you slip up. If you complete 10 out of 14 days, that's already a huge win.

Day	Did I run my shutdown ritual? (Y/N)	Did I respect my check-in windows? (Y/N)	Sleep / Stress (0-10)
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			
Day 6			
Day 7			
Day 8			
Day 9			
Day 10			
Day 11			
Day 12			
Day 13			
Day 14			

