Corey Andrew Powell ([00:02](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Hello everyone. I am Corey Andrew Powell, and this is Motivational Mondays. I am very happy to be joined today by Adam Alter, the professor of Marketing and Psychology, and the Stanski Teaching Excellence Faculty Fellow at New York University's Stern School of Business with an affiliated professorship in social psychology at NYU psychology department. Now Altar is also the New York Times bestselling author of two books, Drunk Tank Pink and Irresistible. And today we're gonna talk about his upcoming book. I think it's not out yet, it's coming right soon, yet in May. It's coming soon, right in May. But we're gonna talk about this new book, which is Anatomy of a Breakthrough, which really deals with getting unstuck in life. So Adam, welcome to Motivational Mondays.

Adam Alter ([00:43](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Thanks for having me, Corey. I really appreciate it.

Corey Andrew Powell ([00:46](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Oh, well, you're very welcome, sir. It's our pleasure. And let's just dive right in. You know, as we were chatting briefly before we started recording, I think everyone can identify with this message, uh, with the messages that you're bringing in this book, because no matter what the situation, we all, uh, get stuck at some point. So tell us about your new book and what was the inspiration behind writing it?

Adam Alter ([01:07](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, so I started writing it at the beginning of the pandemic when we were all physically stuck. We were forced into our homes, we were forced away from our friends. And it, it felt like a time when we were all grappling with stuckness in one form or another. And I ran this huge survey around the world asking people if there was any way in which they were stuck. And they all said, yes, there's at least one thing right now that makes me feel like I'm stuck. And it, it didn't ha necessarily have to do with the pandemic. And then I asked them, how does that make you feel? Do you feel alone or do you feel like everyone's stuck alongside you? And most people feel pretty isolated when they feel stuck. And then I I, I discovered that they, they are willing to devote a huge number of their resources to getting unstuck. And so I wanted to provide the manual for doing that. And that's what this is. It's a compendium that's sort of brings together about 20, probably 20 years of research to form a, a guide for getting unstuck with a whole series of steps you can take to get there no matter what you're, you seem to be stuck with.

Corey Andrew Powell ([02:03](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So formulaically, would you say it's like, there's, there's one formula no matter what the situations are from, as we talked about midlife crisis or maybe you have a relationship problem, you're saying there's like this system in place that you can apply to get out of it.

Adam Alter ([02:19](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah. Broadly speaking, there is, I, you know, it obviously differs a little bit depending on the domain. You know, like if you're an athlete and you wanna run a little bit faster, it's a little bit different from dealing with the psychological stress of something like a midlife crisis. But yes, um, that's the basic idea.

Corey Andrew Powell ([02:35](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Wow. That's amazing because I mean, I think that's the biggest issue. You tap right into it like people are willing or they want to actually get help.

Adam Alter ([02:43](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, absolutely. And I think they just, they just don't really know what, what to do. I think being stuck feels it's a little bit overwhelming. So a lot of the book deals with the emotional side of, of grappling with being stuck, but once they get help, once they reach out for help, they've gotta, obviously gotta make sure sure that they have a sort of script for dealing with, uh, with the process of, of getting unstuck. And that's what the book is designed to do.

Corey Andrew Powell ([03:05](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Well, you mentioned some specifics, like things that we all may experience that get us overwhelmed perhaps, and it can be then having to deal with, well, it manifests into anxiety, fear, anger, and eventually a numbness, which is sort of like what I'm getting from your book. This numbness is where we often just kind of settle.

Adam Alter ([03:24](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah.

Corey Andrew Powell ([03:25](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And then we just deal with it and don't even try to get out of that funk we're in. Exactly. So, so speak a little bit about that. This the not having to settle.

Adam Alter ([03:33](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, the, I think that's right. I think the first response is the sort of emotional flailing. Like we don't really know exactly how to deal with the fact that it feels unpleasant to be stuck. And so it leads to all these negative emotions. Actually, there's one really interesting thing that I discovered during some research I was doing about 15 years ago, which is that there are very big cultural differences in terms of how we grapple with stuckness. So in, in western countries, we tend to anticipate that things are just gonna kind of roll along the way they have in the past. And so I did some research asking people, for example, you know, if it's been sunny for the last three days, what's the weather gonna be like tomorrow? Or it's been rainy the last three days, what's it gonna be like tomorrow? We tend to think things are gonna continue as they have been in the west, in the east places like Japan, Korea, China, people anticipate much more change and that makes them much better prepared for changes that lead them to be stuck mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Whereas in the west, in the US for example, we often feel a little bit blindsided by it. And so that first thing you've gotta do is to kind of accept that you're stuck. It's, it's maybe not exactly what you are hoping for, but it's inevitable. It's gonna happen throughout the course of your life. And then, you know, once you marshal the emotional resources to cope with it, you can then figure out the strategies to, to getting unstuck.

Corey Andrew Powell ([04:39](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Hmm. Do you think a lot of it though is, um, I mean things are not necessarily on an equal playing field. For example, if I'm trying to grapple with something that is a mistake I made in my past, it feels like that would be very different than trying to overcome something that's been done to me that I feel has not allowed me to move forward. And I, I just, so to me, the idea that I can sort of approach those the same way is interesting. And I, and I'm optimistic about that, but that just seems like, you know, they would need sort of very different perspectives to get past them cuz they're very different situations.

Adam Alter ([05:15](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, no, I think you're absolutely right. I, I don't, I don't think there's sort of a, a single blueprint that deals with every single instance of being stuck the same way. It's that once you realize that it's the form of stuckness that you can grapple with and you can actually overcome yourself, then there might be something you can do about it. So, you know, broadly speaking, I talk about these two kinds of stuckness in the book. One kind is the kind where there's really nothing you can do. So, you know, it's say there's a pandemic and you're forced inside your house because there's legislation that says you can't leave and you're quarantined. Right? It doesn't matter how much I wanted to be back in Australia visiting my family, that's not something I could do. I was, I was in the US and that was, I was physically stuck and there was nothing to do about that. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, that's really just a matter of accepting the situation. But the vast majority of stuckness is actually the kind where there is something you can do. And so you mentioned someone's done something to you or it's something that you are trying to enact yourself as long as it's within your power to do something. I think the, the general approach is fairly similar between those two situations. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> obviously sometimes it involves someone else, someone, sometimes it's just about yourself, but, but a lot of the same ideas I think apply, uh, across these contexts.

Corey Andrew Powell ([06:22](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah. And I think you really tap into something there that is the, the first thing people have to really start to deal with, which is the thing you can't change. Right. I mean, I, it, I know that's almost cliche. There's always that whole thing about, you know, there's that prayer like, God grant me the serenity to what? I dunno, it's some prayer <laugh>.

Adam Alter ([06:40](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, I know what you mean.

Corey Andrew Powell ([06:40](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

So you know what I mean. Right. And it says that, it says basically, you know, give me the strength to like, uh, accept the things I cannot change, which I really believe is, uh, a really great way to approach it. Um, and I think if we can maybe get people to start to grasp that more, they won't feel so responsible for that thing that they're going through. Right. Because some things are actually just out of your control and that's to be accepted.

Adam Alter ([07:03](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

That's true. Yeah. And I think for those things, one of the things you could do early on when you feel suck is if you know that it's something that's beyond your control, it's liberating to know there's not much you can do about it in the moment and hope things will pass. But what that also does is it frees up your resources to deal with the kinds of stuckness that are within your control to change. And that's, that's I think the idea.

Corey Andrew Powell ([07:23](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah. Another great point. Your book drives home is that what reminds me of, um, uh, Jennifer Kaufman is her name. She was a survivor of the marathon, uh, the Boston Marathon bombing. And I had her on the show a year ago. And, you know, she really was candid about having gone through that situation and how it changed her. And at one point she got really honest and said, I was this nice lady in Boston and I went to plotting, trying to plot the death of this young man because he had altered my life. It was very profound for her. Of course. Yeah. Admit that. But it was honest. And, um, and then she said she had this breakthrough where she decided to look at the situation differently and decided to analyze and say, well, why would a young man like that do something like this? Yeah. And then she began to research him and sort of understood the ideology that he had been sort of swept up in through with extremism. Anyway, long story short, she ended up changing her perspective and she said she now embraced him and she embraced what had happened to her. And she said she realized in life that some things now don't happen to you, they happen for you and you don't really know, you have to make sure you change your perspective. So I I get that from your book as well.

Adam Alter ([08:34](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah. That's, I mean, obviously that takes an in incredible degree of strength and, um, that's unbelievably admirable. But the part about changing your, your perspective I think is, is, uh, it's a big part of the way I think about getting unstuck. And in fact, there's a whole section in the book on how to turn to other people, other voices for changing your sort of, the, the way you've been marinating and the way you are, you know, you've been, I don't know if it's brought up or that, uh, where you happen to live or who you happen to be exposed to. Everyone has a particular way of thinking about things. And often the best way to get unstuck is to draw on diversity, diverse ideas, diverse attitudes, diverse values, diverse backgrounds. And so often when we assemble teams or we ask for advice, we turn to someone who is like us in many respects.

Adam Alter ([09:18](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And that's often a mistake. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, because you don't need 2, 3, 4, 5 of you. What you need is people who see things a little bit differently to jostle you to kind of shake things up a little bit. And actually, um, chat GPT, this new generative AI model, you ask questions and it gives you back responses. I think one of its best use cases is exactly that. You can go to it and say something like, I'm stuck in this way. What perspectives can you bring to bear on this? And it'll actually spit out a whole lot of different ideas that you may not have had before. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, you may not like all of them, but what it'll do is it'll kind of act as those mirrors for you to, to send your ideas towards and then they bounce back. And I think it's a, it's a really nice way to use both other people, not use, but to consult other people and then to use this, this new, uh, AI model.

Corey Andrew Powell ([10:02](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah. I'm glad you brought that up because people are pretty much freaking out about the AI chat function that's going on with that app because I guess it's sort of like, it seems like it's, they don't know if it's information that could be trusted, but, but that is interesting because it doesn't do it from a standpoint of any sort of perspective or opinion. It's a matter of fact about here's factually what you can do to get out of this situation. That's pretty much how it would approach it. Right?

Adam Alter ([10:26](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

It's true. It doesn't even matter if it's right or not. Like e even if what it's saying is, is patently wrong, what it does is just give you more information, a different way to look at things. It's feeding you little crumbs that then you can follow or you can decide not to follow. So it's not that you're looking for facts so much as you're just looking to be led down at path that's different from the way you would normally think of things. Because if the way you normally think of things was gonna be the the way to get unstuck, you'd probably be unstuck already. Um, so that's why that diversity of thought and that that jostling from the way you think about things today is so valuable.

Corey Andrew Powell ([10:58](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah. And I have friends who just love the app because it's kind of weird too. It's kind of fun, right? Yes, that's right. They're like creating like, they're like, um, the visual one, the visual version of my friends are like, um, spaghetti with a mustache and a cowboy hat and like it'll just create.

Adam Alter ([11:10](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

<laugh>.

Corey Andrew Powell ([11:10](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

It'll create whatever that would look like, which is kind of terrifying actually. <laugh>

Adam Alter ([11:14](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

It is. I I've seen some of those. They are, they're terrifying <laugh>. Yeah.

Corey Andrew Powell ([11:17](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

That's pretty much not the right use for that. But I'm glad you brought up the asking other people's perspectives about things because my follow up to that was going to, or or is actually so often we are the biggest culprit of the negative voices and as you mentioned it, whether it be upbringing, maybe your programmed a certain way because of how you've been taught or spoken to and, but very often the most negative voices that are being generated in our heads are coming from us. Right. So I think what you just said makes a lot of sense about getting someone else's perspective, cuz we may be doing ourselves the most harm.

Adam Alter ([11:54](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah.

Corey Andrew Powell ([11:54](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

When it comes to those perspectives.

Adam Alter ([11:56](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, I think that's right. I think, uh, often, you know, people who see things from outside yourself, third parties, I think they see things often with a kinder eye, a gentler eye. And uh, and, and it's worth cultivating those relationships and friendships. You want those people around you who see the world that way. And so turning to those, those people I think is a, is a tremendously valuable form of self-care, basically.

Corey Andrew Powell ([12:18](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. And by that same token, I wanna just make sure, and I hate to, you know, be the bearer of bad news, but, um, very often people like family can be the worst ones to get that information from. I mean, it, it really depends on your environment and your support circle, but you definitely should try to find that support circle of people who are really there to help you shine and not, um, diminish you or bring you down. So let's just, yeah, if anyone's listening and watching, that's what we would recommend. Now I would love to get into some specifics though as well when it comes to your, your four steps, the four step inner journey that you have, uh, coined the phrase the the friction audit. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> and I noticed that four Hs, which is even more fun, but there's already a four H club, so you probably couldn't brand that one.

Adam Alter ([13:03](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

<laugh>.

Corey Andrew Powell ([13:04](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

I think that's already existent.

Adam Alter ([13:06](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Corey Andrew Powell ([13:06](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

But you have help heart, head and habit. These are the, the four areas. And just to kind of tap into them lightly when it comes to help, uh, what is your position on that particular area?

Adam Alter ([13:20](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah. Help is really that sort of first step. When you first get confronted with being stuck, the first thing to do is to sort of understand what stuckness is and how it can affect you when it's likely to arise. And I think one of the most useful things is to know that it's universal and that even that, you know, what you, what you encounter on Instagram and on TikTok and wherever else in the real world, the stuff you see is the finished perfect product of everything. Instead of, instead of seeing the, the, the, the progress, the the steps that it takes to get there, all you end up seeing is that final perfect product. And so as a result you sort of assume that everyone else has an easier ride than you do. So a big part of that help section at the beginning is just to try to get a sense of the fact that you're not alone. There are other people going through similar things and even when you see the final product, there were lots of rough drafts along the way. And it's liberating to understand that, I think.

Corey Andrew Powell ([14:09](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah. I'm so glad you brought that one up because it was literally, well, at the very end of the book I'll just, you know, like No, you have this section that says 100, it's 100 conclusions. Exactly.

Adam Alter ([14:21](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah.

Corey Andrew Powell ([14:21](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And it was, and that's number two I can already tell by cause I remembered that one. I was gonna talk to you about that one. Number two talks about, I think it was number two, now I'm getting a little overconfident. But I think that you were saying in that one that we only see the after, like you just said, we don't see the before and especially with dealing with social media, the trap to avoid is that before can be completely a facade.

Adam Alter ([14:43](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, absolutely.

Corey Andrew Powell ([14:44](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

You know, the false life, the people on the yacht, you know, they probably, you know, rented it or a friend, it's a friend's boat mm-hmm. <affirmative>, all these facades. And we're trying to, like someone said to me recently, we're trying to get approval from people with the blue check marker we've never met.

Adam Alter ([14:58](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Exactly. Yeah. I, I mean, and that, that's especially true on social media where everything is curated to within an inch inch of its life. So everything you're seeing is like the best 1% of everyone else's existence. So not only is it the successful end product, but also all the, the warts, all the difficult stuff, all the complexity is kept away from you by design mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And so I, I, I think that's, that's why that that first section is really about getting an understanding of, of stuckness it's prevalence, how common it is and, and also how surmountable it, it's that you can do something about it.

Corey Andrew Powell ([15:30](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

No, that's wonderful. And it reminds me of my friends wrote, cause I'm on social media a lot and my friends are like, you don't, you don't ever take a bad picture. I'm like, yeah, I take thousands of them, but I don't post those. I'm only posting that one in 1000. You'll never see the rest. Exactly. <laugh>. So, and well the second, um, area of the, uh, friction audit is heart. And now when I first read that, when I took it, well when I read that chapter, I began to take it a little literally because you began talking about the body being equipped to actually mm-hmm. <affirmative> deal with, you know, stresses and everything. Did you mean that in the actual literal sense when you mentioned the body like processing stress, breathing? Or did you just mean the heart as in the emotive response emotional?

Adam Alter ([16:13](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, I meant it in both respects. So it, it refers to heart as a sort of metaphor or as a, as a symbol of emotion. But it also refers to the way our bodies initially respond to any stressor. And so whereas we are very, very good at dealing with physical stuckness, with entrapment, we're not, in other words, we just sort of flail. And, and humans are very good at dealing with that. We are really, really bad at dealing with the emotional kind of stuckness that tends to happen from time to time because that same flailing just means that it's very hard for you to operate in a way that's rational and careful and thoughtful. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So that whole section is really an attempt to understand how when you're confronted by the overwhelming emotions associated with stuckness, you can move forward. How you can grapple with them, manage the anxiety and, and really redirect your resources in the right direction because your instincts are often not great in those situations. Instead of flailing channel your resources in the right direction.

Corey Andrew Powell ([17:05](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Well just yesterday I interviewed, uh, an amazing woman named Ritu Bhasin and she was a high power attorney from Canada. She was born to a, um, a family who was, they were from uh, India, a Punjabi family. And so she felt like she had all these pressures culturally and then she became a high powered lawyer. She had more pressures there and she was getting burned out, sort of being everything everybody wanted her to be. And she felt like she was not being seen for who she was and she didn't know who she was cuz she had been so busy being forced to be someone else. Yeah. So she left everything and went to India and began to take these intensive sort of yoga retreats and breathing. And so that's why when I first opened up that chapter for heart, I thought, you know, there is that component where physically sometimes you just have to be allow yourself to be still.

Adam Alter ([17:54](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, yeah.

Corey Andrew Powell ([17:54](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And shut out the noise so you can hear yourself think and try to work stuff out. Cause you've got stuff coming at you in all directions.

Adam Alter ([18:01](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah. One of the examples that I touched on is, well, this, this concept of pausing before you act of really taking a beat. And I talk about Lionel Messi, the, the soccer player from Argentina who I think is, is the best player alive today and possibly the greatest player of all time. But what's really interesting about Messi is he's famously anxious before games. He finds some anxiety provoking even despite his phenomenal performances. And, um, he has learned to spend the first few minutes of the game kind of slowly pacing the pitch to get a sense of the lay of the land. He looks at all the other players, looks at who's working which way with each other, is someone injured, is there something he should know about? And so he sort of sacrifices the first few minutes of the game for the next 88 of the 90 minutes so that he's much better prepared. And so this idea of of, uh, of taking a pause of slowing things down and it, that's a literal sort of cardiovascular response is, is taking your, your racing heart, helping it slow down by just taking a beat for a minute is a, is a really, really helpful thing that sacrifice initially for the long-term gain that comes from it is, uh, it runs counter to our intuitions, but it's very, it's very, very helpful.

Corey Andrew Powell ([19:09](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah. That's, and that's something that translates over into everyday life. I think even the most mundane situations, like for example, now that I work a lot in the public media space and I have a lot of conversations and, um, I realize that things you say will always be there on the internet if you're not careful, <laugh>. Right. So, you know, it's made me be a very different person in 2023 than I was like in 2008 on Facebook. Right. Because I stop and I say, how am I going to respond versus the old response, which is, you know what I mean? And, but it just saves you a lot of the anguish that comes with being a quick draw without really thinking first. So.

Adam Alter ([19:50](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Total agree.

Corey Andrew Powell ([19:51](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, I think that relates to that too. So, um, head learning how to think in ways that are helpful, strategic, valuable, and driving you towards getting unstuck, which is sort of what we've already been talking about, but yeah, specifically the head.

Adam Alter ([20:03](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah. So, you know, this is about the mental strategies you can use to get unstuck and there are a few that depend on the domain that we're talking about. So there's some, some work showing for example, that, um, you know, what, what we tend to do with a problem is we add to it, we try to add bolt-on solutions to a problem. Like if something's not going well, we're like, what else can I do to fix it? And often that means making it more complex, but that intuition is often wrong. And often the best thing you can do as part of this kind of friction audit process is to strip away what's extraneous and unnecessary. And by simplifying things in a very concerted way, which is not our intuition, we often make things easier and we make them tractable and manageable and we're able to get through them.

Adam Alter ([20:42](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

So that's one of the ideas. Another one that's I think similar to that is that we, in creative pursuits, if you're trying to start a business after college or during college or you are trying to, you know, figure something out. You're, you're an artist or you're a writer or you're a mu musician, very often we're searching for something that's truly radically original, which is an incredibly high bar to set. And when you look at products that we think of as truly original, like songwriters who create great songs or artists who create great art, if you ask them, they'll say, oh no, not at all. This is the, the combination of lots of different elements. And so this idea of switching true originality out for something that I call recombination, which is taking a few old ideas, but merging them in ways that are new, that's a really useful way to move forward mentally instead of trying for something genuinely radically new, take things, old elements, recombine them. And, um, you'll often have a really successful product as a result of that. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>,

Corey Andrew Powell ([21:37](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

That also reminds me of another bit of advice that seems kind of similar in a sense where a lot of people will put a lot of time and energy in things that are not there forte with the idea that I have to really get better at this thing I'm not good at, which is admirable, right? You can't play guitar, then you should maybe practice, put the time in, but there's a certain point where maybe you're overlooking that you're a terrific singer and maybe the idea would be leave the guitar playing to someone who's a badass guitarist who you can hire to really like, shred and kill behind you and you be a badass vocalist because that's what you do. Well, and I think that reminds me of that sort of lesson where very often we are focusing on the stuff that we're kind of mediocre at versus the stuff that we're good at.

Adam Alter ([22:21](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, I, so there's a, there are two terms for this. Um, there's exploration and exploitation and the, the basic idea is there are two modes for trying to get better at things or for pursuing things in your life. And I remember thinking about college and also the early days for me of being a professor, it was an era where I said yes to everything. Mm-hmm. Like if an opportunity came up, I said yes, and I just, I wanted to meet new people and do new things and do a thousand different things and guitar and drums and bass and everything singer. You know, I would've said yes to all of it. And I did to the point where I wasn't sleeping enough, I was going crazy, but this was a period of exploration and I wanted to understand better what my options were in the world.

Adam Alter ([22:59](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And then once you've done that and you've explored, say, paths A to Z, then you can say, Hey, look, path J that was my path. That was the one. And once you do that, you start exploiting and exploiting is a time where instead of saying yes to everything, you start saying no to most things because it's all about J. You go down that path, you take it as far as you can take it. You, you try to make it the very best you can make it, but as a result you need to leave behind, you know, a, B, C, D and so on. And so that's, that's a really useful way of thinking about pursuing different ideas, different relationships, different friendships, all sorts of different things in the world. There will be a period of yes, but eventually you've gotta get to the period of no where you say no to most things. So you can make the most of the thing that seems to be the best or the things, it doesn't have to be just one, but you've gotta sort of zoom in and and focus on the things that you're really good at.

Corey Andrew Powell ([23:46](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

That is one of the greatest leadership lessons that I have heard literally on this show. And I've been doing it for two years.

Adam Alter ([23:52](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Oh, thank you. <laugh>.

Corey Andrew Powell ([23:52](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, I mean explore, because the, what happens is, you know, we are made to, and I almost kind of put it in a negative context there too. Um, we're almost made to feel guilty by trying a lot of stuff if we aren't great at them. But, you know, you owe it to yourself too. Try all the things you may be interested in as a way of reading out what you're not good at <laugh> and what you're excel at now.

Adam Alter ([24:16](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Absolutely. I mean, you're creating that menu, right? The menu of options and you will only be able to pick from the menu you create. And if the menu's tiny, well then you're gonna pick one out of the very few things you've experienced. If it's a much bigger menu, not only do you end up picking something that's more likely to suit you, but there's something great about being able to say, I know what else is out there and that's not for me. That that's a really liberating feeling as you move, move forward in the particular path you're on in life, rather than wondering if there are all these wonderful things that you left behind.

Corey Andrew Powell ([24:42](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Yeah, yeah. And it's really good to be, um, to excel at things versus being mediocre at things. So I think that makes perfect sense. And also, you know, my last point on that too, when it comes to just physical bandwidth, so many of us will say yes to them just because we wanna please people. And I have, I've worked through that over the past few years because I just really want to do everything for people and they ask, oh yeah, sure. Oh, of course. And I don't even stop first to say, well, what is already my bandwidth? What do I have in front of me already? And now that I've navigated learning how to first before I say yes, I stop it, I can say, well, let me get back to you. I can't say yes right now.

Adam Alter ([25:22](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Right.

Corey Andrew Powell ([25:23](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Because that's how you would avoid the burnout, which is really also a, a failing point. Yeah. That's not a good thing. So, wow. Lot of points there, which is a great leadership lesson for our community. So number four, habit.

Adam Alter ([25:35](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Habit is action. So really all of this, the service in service of action you have, you've gotta get your emotions in the right place, you've gotta get some strategies in place, but really it's all about what you do. That that ultimately matters. Getting unstuck is, is is really about doing certain things. And so that section is about how to act and also just the primacy and importance of action at all. Uh, there are these great, great, uh, artists, musicians again, people, entrepreneurs, people in all walks of life who talk about the fact that just doing anything is better than doing nothing for getting unstuck. And so there's a guy named Jeff Tweedy, he's the front man of a band called Wilco, and he talks about, he's also a writer and he talks about this, this act of pouring out the bad stuff from your head before you can start writing the good stuff, whether it's music or whether you're writing an essay or a book.

Adam Alter ([26:23](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And so he, he basically wakes up in the morning and he'll just start pouring that information out. And most of it's nonsense. It's not what he's gonna use, it's not gonna go get committed to to print or he is not gonna publish it or share it with anyone else, but just by the act going through the motions of doing, you lubricate the wheels and everything seems to start moving forward in a way that's, that's profitable later on. So, um, that whole section is really about what kinds of actions to take and also just the general importance of action above all, you've gotta start moving in the right direction.

Corey Andrew Powell ([26:53](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Wow. Excellent, excellent words of wisdom. Adam Alter, professor and author of Anatomy of A Breakthrough, which will be out soon and it's a great book. I love it. And it's, I feel like it's gonna be one of those books I'm gonna refer to just as a reference every now and then, what does Adam say about this?

Adam Alter ([27:08](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

<laugh>

Corey Andrew Powell ([27:08](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

As life comes at me? So I think it's a good reference book. So thank you so much for being here today on Motivational Mondays.

Adam Alter ([27:14](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Thanks so much, Corey. I appreciate it.

Corey Andrew Powell ([27:16](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/FNpczDN_awNlO1upzRbnJGGP41QmmVQd1jyKJpwbaQpkdo7Z88Ajw9Oxi_DE8xQ8tIBbYplZ0AZiKaKwo8G2pXsN2Uc?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Thank you for listening to Motivational Mondays presented by The National Society of Leadership and Success and available wherever you listen to your favorite podcast. I'm Corey Andrew Powell, and I'll see you again here next week.