



UNSTUCK

momentum for day-to-day life

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tackle everyday obstacles

IF YOU'RE

- Dealing with more than you can manage
- Facing difficult decisions, demands, or opinions
- Feeling stuck, uncertain, or unsure where to start

AND YOU WANT

- Skills to push through difficult situations at home or work
- Confidence that obstacles won't hold you back
- Motivation to tackle unexpected challenges

THIS GUIDE WILL HELP

Being stuck drains momentum. This guide gives you eight practical tools, adapted from methods proven for decades in business. Each one clears a common thing that stops people and turns it into a specific action, so you get moving again.

USING THE **UNSTUCK GUIDE** FROM PMEZ?

The FINISH LINE tools are similar to the UNSTUCK ones because they are both based on the same business methods. But The FINISH LINE is oriented to reaching a goal while UNSTUCK is oriented to moving past everyday obstacles.

WORKING TOWARDS A SPECIFIC GOAL?

While the UNSTUCK guide gives you tools for the everyday obstacles that can stall your progress, the FINISH LINE organizes the tools to sustain the effort needed to reach a goal. Get the guide at pmez.org ◀ all rights reserved ▶ info@pmez.org

how it works

UNSTUCK gives you eight tools for the everyday situations that get you stuck. Find the situation you're facing and use the tool to get moving.

When faced with...	Use this Tool
Hard Choices	Decisions
Nagging Concerns	Worries
Too Many Requests	Demands
Too Many Priorities	Priorities
Unwelcome Input	Opinions
Big Jobs	Direction
Resource Shortfalls	Readiness
Long Standstills	Momentum

Not sure where to start? Pick the situation that's nagging you most right now and begin there.



DECISIONS

focus on your drivers, not pros and cons

when you're stuck

- flip-flopping between options
- torn between want and should
- afraid of choosing wrong

actions to take

- name the decision and list your options.
- review the **drivers** listed below. Drivers are the ideals and forces that steer decisions.
- choose one or two drivers you'd most regret ignoring.
- make your decision using those drivers.

for example

Torn between a steady job and a risky startup, Dana named her top drivers, growth and freedom. These both pointed to going with the start-up.

DRIVERS

ideals that matter to you

- freedom & independence
- connection & belonging
- growth & learning
- security & stability
- creativity & expression
- service & helping others
- joy & fun

forces acting on you

- ego & pride
- obligation & guilt
- fear & insecurity
- peer & social pressure



WORRIES

reframe the worry as a risk

when you're stuck

- facing difficult what-ifs
- stalled by doubts
- avoiding something because of worst-case-scenarios

actions to take

- state your worry clearly.
- assess its likelihood based on facts, not feelings.
- picture what it would look like if it actually happened, to understand its impact.
- ask: "in the big picture, how bad is the impact?"
- if the likelihood is high and the impact is bad, then:
 - find ways to reduce the chances it will happen
 - decide now how you will adjust if it does

for example

Torn between a steady job and a risky startup, Dana named her top drivers, growth and freedom. These both pointed to going with the start-up.



DEMANDS

sideline the unessential

when you're stuck

- flooded with requests or expectations
- feeling obliged to say "yes"
- conflicted between others' demands and your own priorities

actions to take

- list all the demands or expectations you're facing:
 - what you promised
 - what people expect
 - what you expect
- decide what is **essential** from the list below.
- for the others, pick a sidelining move:
 - **skip** it's nice to have but not worth the effort
 - **postpone** it can happen another time
 - **simplify** it's worth doing but in a smaller or easier form

for example

swamped before a trip, Priya kept the must-dos, postponed the deep clean, and skipped the homemade snacks

ESSENTIALS

health, safety, legality

things that must be done to keep people safe, follow laws, or meet basic responsibilities

basic operation, use, enjoyment

the minimum needed to make something work or be worthwhile

promises made

commitments you have explicitly made and are responsible for



PRIORITIES

sort by importance, not urgency

when you're stuck

- feeling like everything is urgent
- avoiding bigger items on your list
- struggling to focus on the "right" task

actions to take

- list everything demanding your attention or effort.
- check each item against the **importance standard** below.
- for items that meet the standard: address these first.
- for items that don't, pick a deferral move
 - ✓ **skip** it's nice to have but not worth the effort
 - ✓ **postpone** it can wait for another time
 - ✓ **delegate** find someone else to handle it

for example

ten "urgent" emails, but only two would cost Marco anything if they waited. He did those first.

IMPORTANCE STANDARD

An item is truly important if delay will cause any of the following:

- costs increase or opportunities close
- someone else is blocked or seriously impacted
- there are health, safety, or legal consequences
- a commitment or deadline is missed
- the problem becomes significantly harder to solve



OPINIONS

focus on those impacted, not the loudest or closest

when you're stuck

- pulled by competing opinions
- expected to satisfy too many views
- anxious about heeding the wrong voice

actions to take

- list those with opinions.
- sort each person by impact:
 - directly: the outcome changes something real for them
 - indirectly: they're touched by it but not changed by it
 - not really: they have opinions but no real stake
- note: closeness and volume don't equal impact. Someone can care deeply and still not be directly affected.
- engage each person accordingly:
 - **directly impacted** actively seek and seriously weigh their input
 - **indirectly impacted** consider their input if offered
 - **not really impacted** listen respectfully, then move on
- for anyone who is noisy or draining, listen respectfully and move on, regardless of their impact.

for example

Five people had opinions on whether Lena should quit her job and start her own business. One was her husband, two were clients who wanted to work with her directly instead of through her current company, and two were her parents. Only her husband and clients were directly impacted whose input needed to be seriously considered.



DIRECTION

define your finish line and work chunks

when you're stuck

- feeling unsure where to start
- working hard without knowing what really matters
- procrastinating because a job feels overwhelming

actions to take

- picture your end result and ask: "what exists when you're done that doesn't exist now?"
- write it down in one sentence and check it against three tests:
 - can you point to it? It should be a real thing, not just an activity.
 - is it realistic? You should be able to do it with your time, money, and skills.
 - does it have a clear end point? You should be able to tell when you are done.
- use the **chunking prompts** below to identify work needed to reach the finish line.
- group together any chunks that are related.

for example

launch a small Etsy shop" became four chunks: photos, listings, pricing, and shipping setup.

tip

If the job still feels too big, the FINISH LINE guide will walk you through a process to deliver something big. Available at pmez.org.

CHUNKING PROMPTS

- What must be created or changed?
- What would someone point to and say "that's done"?
- What would each person take if three people divided this work?
- What has to happen before anything else can start?



READINESS

close the gaps, not avoid them

when you're stuck

- feeling uncertain about what is needed
- doubting you have what you'll need
- depending on someone who might not follow through

actions to take

- first, understand what you want to do by using the Direction tool.
- then for each chunk of work, identify the **resources** you'll need from the list below.
- check whether you have each resource ready to go.
- for any gaps, pick a closing move:
 - **get it** acquire or arrange what's missing
 - **borrow it** find someone who has it and can share
 - **substitute it** find something else that works well enough
 - **recruit help** bring someone in who has what you need
 - **shrink things** reduce your goal to fit what you have

for example

afdsfad

RESOURCES

people

someone's time or effort

skills or knowledge

abilities you or others need to do something

money

funding, savings or income to cover costs

tools or materials

physical or digital things required

access

space, permissions, accounts or connections



MOMENTUM

pause, take stock, then reset

when you're stuck

- feeling stalled and can't restart
- working hard but not seeing results
- watching a goal that keeps moving

actions to take

- take stock of what's already done by asking "since starting, what have I accomplished, even partially?"
- use the **momentum reset table** below to diagnose why you stalled.
- based on your diagnosis, make the reset move.

for example

afdsfad

MOMENTUM RESET TABLE

the goals was never clear or has shifted

reset by writing your goal in one sentence. See the **Direction** tool for help.

the work feels too big or the next step is unclear

reset by breaking the work that remains into chunks (smaller pieces). See the **Direction** tool for help.

time, skills, money, support, or access is lacking

reset by naming what's missing. Then get it, borrow it, substitute it, recruit help, or shrink things to fit what you have. The **Readiness** tool can help.

the work has grown beyond what was originally planned

reset by deciding what to cut. Focus only on what's essential for your goal. The **Demands** tool can help set boundaries.

you've lost motivation or confidence

reset by revisiting why the goal was important in the first place. The **Decisions** tool has a list of drivers that can identify what matters.



curious about more from PMEZ?

THE FINISH LINE GUIDE

Working toward a bigger goal, like a career change, a community project, or personal initiative? The FINISH LINE guide gives you path and the momentum to reach it. Free at PMEZ.org.

GROUP WORKSHOPS

Bring UNSTUCK to your team. Hands-on sessions where participants work through the tools on their own real challenges.

TALKS

Engaging talks finding momentum when you're stuck, using practical tools. Available for conferences, companies, and community events.

ONLINE Q&A

PMEZ.org hosts a forum where people can raise questions and get answers.



A note from Kathleen

I spent over 35 years using these tools inside big tech companies, then five more years deciphering them to be practical for regular people.

I knew I'd gotten them right when attendees of my sessions started saying, "this seems so obvious, why didn't I know it sooner."

And since retiring, I've discovered an unusual passion: helping people build and sustain the momentum to do the things that matter to them, using these tools I "stole" from big business.

If this guide helped, I'd love to hear from you.

Kathleen

Founder of PMEZ.org