Scrhoz

Find the 3 That Matter Prompt Pack

Prepared by Dan Rivers | Scrhoz

15 simple prompts for finding the few things that move your work forward, testing productivity habits properly, simplifying your routine and deciding what to stop doing.

How to Use This Pack

- Copy a prompt, paste it into any AI assistant (ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini or similar), and replace each [BRACKETED] part with your own details.
- Rough hours and plain descriptions are enough. You're looking for the pattern, and exact figures won't change it.
- Change one thing at a time and give it a week. One small test teaches you more than ten new systems.
- The AI sorts, asks questions and does the sums. You decide what matters, because you know your work. Leave out client names and anything confidential, and check your employer's rules on AI tools before you paste anything from work.

Note: These prompts are for general thinking about work and routines. They are not professional or career advice. AI can misjudge your situation and get arithmetic wrong, so check any figures it gives you and trust your own judgement about what matters.

Find What Matters

1. Audit My Week

> Here's roughly how I spent my last working week: [LIST ACTIVITIES WITH APPROXIMATE HOURS]. My main goal at work right now is [GOAL]. Sort each activity into three groups: moves my goal forward, has to be done but doesn't move the goal, and neither. Show the hours in each group and tell me what you notice.

Tip: Rough hours are fine. Look at your calendar if you're not sure.

2. Find My Three

> My role: [ROLE]. My goal for the next [3 MONTHS]: [GOAL]. Here's what I spend my time on: [LIST]. Suggest the three activities most likely to move my goal forward, and say why. Then ask me two questions that would test whether you've picked the right three.

Tip: If you can't name your three, that's useful to know.

3. What Am I Busy With That Moves Nothing?

> Here's my list of regular tasks and commitments: [LIST]. For each one, tell me what would realistically happen if I stopped doing it for a month. Group them into things that would be missed, things that would be noticed a little, and things nobody would notice.

Tip: Take the "nobody would notice" group seriously. It's often bigger than you'd think.

4. Spot My Productivity Traps

> Here are the habits and tools I use to stay productive: [LIST, E.G. A COLOUR-CODED CALENDAR, DAILY INBOX ZERO, TWO TO-DO APPS]. For each one, tell me whether it helps me get important work done or mostly feels productive. Ask me what I'd lose if I dropped it.

Tip: A tidy system feels good. Check that it produces something.

Test a Habit or Hack

5. Test a Hack for One Week

> I want to try [PRODUCTIVITY HACK OR HABIT]. Design a one-week test: what I'll do each day, what to measure (keep it simple), how I'll know whether it helped, and what would make me stop early. Keep the effort small.

Tip: Change one thing at a time. Otherwise you won't know what made the difference.

6. Rank the Hacks I've Tried

> Here are the productivity hacks I've tried: [LIST]. For each one I'll tell you whether I still use it and what it did for me: [NOTES]. Rank them by how much they helped compared with the effort they take. Suggest which three to keep and which to drop.

Tip: The best ones tend to be small. Keep those and let the rest go.

7. Review the Test

> I tested [HACK] for [NUMBER] days. What I did: [DESCRIBE]. What happened to my work, energy and focus: [DESCRIBE]. Ask me three questions about what I noticed. Then help me decide whether to keep it, change it or drop it, and what to test next.

Tip: A hack that didn't work has still taught you something.

8. Is It Worth the Setup Time?

> I'm thinking about adopting [TOOL, SYSTEM OR HABIT]. Estimate the time it takes to set up and maintain each week, and the time it might realistically save. Show your working, state your assumptions, and tell me how long it would take to pay back. Be straight with me if it won't.

Tip: Some systems cost more time than they save. Do the sum first.

Redesign a Routine

9. Redesign My Workday

> Here's what a typical workday looks like for me: [DESCRIBE FROM START TO FINISH]. My three priorities are [LIST]. Suggest a simpler version of the day that protects time for them. Keep what's working, change as little as possible, and explain each change.

Tip: Keep the parts you like. A routine you enjoy is easier to stick with.

10. Find the Friction

> I keep missing [IMPORTANT TASK OR HABIT]. What usually happens: [DESCRIBE]. Ask me up to five questions, one at a time, about what gets in the way (time, energy, setup, distractions, other people). Then suggest three small changes that would reduce the friction.

Tip: Making something easier to start often works better than trying harder.

11. A Minimum Version for Bad Days

> Here's my usual routine for [AREA, E.G. WORK / EXERCISE / WRITING]: [DESCRIBE]. Help me design a minimum version that takes about [10] minutes, for days when I'm tired, busy or behind. Describe it, and give me a rule for when to use it and when to go back to the full routine.

Tip: On a bad day, the minimum version keeps the habit going.

12. Change One Thing at a Time

> I'd like to change several things about how I work: [LIST]. Put them in the order I should tackle them, one at a time, starting with the one most likely to help and easiest to try. For each, say how long to give it before I move on.

Tip: Two weeks per change is a good rhythm. Slower is fine.

Make a Drop List

13. Make a Stop-Doing List

> Here's what's on my plate: [LIST OF TASKS, HABITS AND COMMITMENTS]. My three priorities are [LIST]. Suggest ten things I could stop, shrink or do less often to make room for them. For each, say what I'd gain and what I might lose, and flag any I should think about carefully first.

Tip: Look at the list again tomorrow. Some items feel easier to drop overnight.

14. Trim My Commitments

> Here are my regular commitments outside my core work (committees, standing meetings, favours, side projects): [LIST WITH TIME PER WEEK]. For each one, help me decide whether to keep it, shrink it or end it. Ask what I get from it and what it costs me in time and energy. Then give me a short script for stepping back from the first one.

Tip: Ending a commitment gets easier once you've done it once.

15. A Monthly Look Back at My Three

> My three priorities this month were [LIST]. Here's what I got done on each: [NOTES]. Here's what took up most of my time instead: [NOTES]. Ask me three questions, then tell me whether my time matched my priorities, and suggest what to change next month.

Tip: Compare your time with your priorities. If they don't match, one of them needs to change.

Where to go next, and more from Dan Rivers:

- Work and Planning Prompt Pack (15 prompts)
- Balanced Ambition
- The One-Year Financial Reset
- CYOS 1: Managing Money (Choose Your Own System)

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