

MATTHEW L. BROWN



# AUDITING YOUR FLOW DISTINCTION DRILL

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A reflection from The Undercurrent Ep. 07 -  
"The Streamline Trap: Moving from Ease to Alignment"

A man with glasses, wearing a white V-neck shirt and dark pants, is sitting in a metal-framed chair. He is holding a black clipboard and a pen, looking down at it. He is in a room with tall white bookshelves filled with books. The background is slightly blurred, and the overall tone is professional and focused.

# What is your time really worth?

Planning and reflection  
time bring clarity,  
alignment, and creative  
momentum.

**Distinction Drills** are designed to bring strategy to  
your self-leadership – helping you move from  
thought to action without losing your values.

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## INTRO

**Distinction Drills** are designed to interrupt autopilot with alignment – to help you pause, examine, and engage what's real. Each one gives you space to audit how you're living, leading, and showing up.

This reflection invites you to slow down and look closer at the rhythms you've accepted as "working." Are they really aligned? Are they sustainable? Are they yours?

**This isn't about adding pressure. It's about trading ease for awareness – and choosing honesty as the foundation of growth.**



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# CLARIFY YOUR GOALS

Before you can audit your flow, you need a clear sense of direction. This section helps you define your goals – the real ones – so you’re not just reacting to life, but moving with intention. This is where alignment begins.

What matters to you right now? Name your top 1-3 goals clearly and honestly.

Goal #1: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why this matters: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Goal #2: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why this matters: \_\_\_\_\_

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Goal #3: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Why this matters: \_\_\_\_\_

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What would alignment  
look like in these areas?

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What’s already in motion –  
even if it’s small?

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# WHAT TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT FLOW & ALIGNMENT

## 1. Flow Isn't Always Aligned

Psychologists define “flow” as a state of deep focus and immersion in a task – often referred to as being “in the zone.” But just because something feels smooth doesn’t mean it’s aligned with your purpose or values. Sometimes what feels effortless is actually a result of routine, not intention.

## 2. Comfort Can Become Your Trap

Research shows that humans are neurologically wired to favor comfort and predictability. The brain’s reward system encourages habits that reduce perceived stress. But comfort isn’t a measure of rightness – it’s just familiar. Alignment, on the other hand, often asks something of us: attention, change, and courage.

## 3. Alignment is Active, Not Passive

Living in alignment requires conscious decision-making. It means checking in with your values, your direction, and your energy. It’s an ongoing practice, not a destination.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Am I coasting, or am I choosing?

Is my rhythm reflective of growth or just survival?

# FLOW AUDIT EXERCISE

Use this space to list out 3-5 current rhythms and evaluate them honestly.

What Feels Easy Right Now	How does this support or disrupt my long-term growth, values, and goals?
My work schedule is predictable.	It gives me structure, but I feel no real challenge or growth in it.
I always say yes to new projects.	It makes me feel needed, but leaves little room for my own priorities.

# GUIDED REFLECTION

Let's begin by tuning into what you're carrying before we start making changes.

What activities or responsibilities do I rarely question?

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Which areas of my life feel quiet – not because they're peaceful, but because they're not being examined?

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Are there things or voices I've stopped questioning because they're familiar or popular?

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What emotions, signals, values or priorities have been trying to get my attention?

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Which of my goals will suffer if I keep ignoring those signals?

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The privilege of a  
lifetime is to become  
who you truly are

CARL JUNG



# ASSIGNMENT OF DISTINCTION

This is where ease gives way to intention. Use this structured breakdown as many times as needed to help guide your next aligned step:

Name the area of ease that may be out of alignment:

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What's the risk if I stay in ease here?

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What's one small shift I can make this week toward alignment?

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What support, resources, or boundaries do I need to help make that shift?

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What will success look like by the end of the week?

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# ON GOALKEEPING & HONESTY

Goalkeeping is more than just checking off boxes – it's a reflection of your willingness to be honest with yourself about what truly matters. When we set goals from a place of alignment, we create space for our deepest values to surface. But when we pursue goals out of habit, performance, or pressure, we risk reinforcing the very patterns that disconnect us from our purpose. According to Locke and Latham's Goal Setting Theory (1990), specific and challenging goals lead to higher performance, but only when they are accepted and genuinely valued by the individual. In other words, clarity and buy-in matter more than pressure and pace.

## Real goals reveal your values.

Research from Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) shows that intrinsic motivation – doing something because it aligns with your inner values – leads to longer-lasting commitment and personal fulfillment.

## Progress is often internal first.

Neuropsychology studies confirm that behavioral change begins with increased awareness and emotional regulation (Siegel, 2012). Just because the outside hasn't changed doesn't mean the inside isn't growing.

## Integrity is the measure, not intensity.

Habit formation expert James Clear emphasizes in Atomic Habits that “you do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems.” And those systems are often built on honesty – the consistent act of naming what's real.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Is my goal really mine?

What am I trying to prove vs. what am I trying to protect?

Can I give myself permission to grow gradually?

# PROGRESS & GOALS TRACKER

Use this page to track your steps forward. Revisit it daily or weekly to measure alignment in action.

Weekly Goal

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Key Actions to Complete It

1.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Key moment(s) where I can choose alignment over ease this week:

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## DAILY ALIGNMENT CHECK-IN

	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
Did I move with intention today towards my goal?	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N
Did I avoid something that needs attention?	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N

# WEEKLY REFLECTION

Take a moment to step back and observe. This is your space to connect the dots, process the week's patterns, and prepare your posture for what's next.

What did I learn about myself this week?

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Where did I notice resistance?

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How will I carry this awareness into next week?

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# FINAL REFLECTION

Use this final space to ground what you've explored and reinforce your commitment to realignment. Let it be honest, specific, and rooted in forward motion.

**Alignment isn't just a choice—it's a commitment to your becoming.**

What truth surfaced for me through this process?

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What am I letting go of in order to move in alignment?

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What's one aligned habit or mindset I want to carry forward?

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What feels possible **now** that didn't feel accessible before this Distinction Drill?

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## **My Alignment Intention**

I will choose alignment over ease by: \_\_\_\_\_

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Because: \_\_\_\_\_

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# GO BENEATH THE SURFACE

REAL STORIES. HONEST ALIGNMENT. ONGOING WORK.

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## The Undercurrent

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