

# FIELD MANUAL



FOR



AS



May 2025 Edition



# CONTENTS

---

1. How to Use This Manual .....	3
1.1. Standard Advice Disclaimer .....	3
1.2. Authoritativeness .....	4
1.3. Self-trust .....	5
1.4. Terminal Values .....	5
2. Quality of Life .....	7
2.1. Individuation from Others .....	7
2.2. Individuation from Yourself .....	8
2.3. Immediate Impatience .....	11
2.4. The Second Arrow of Feelings .....	12
3. Strategic Planning .....	15
3.1. Optimism .....	15
3.2. Zero-Decision Defaults .....	15
3.3. Scheduling .....	17
3.3.1. Day of Rest .....	17
3.3.2. Day of the Deadline .....	18
3.4. Passion .....	19
4. Signs and Indicators .....	21
4.1. General .....	21
4.2. Sleep .....	21
4.3. Frustration .....	22
5. Final Remarks .....	23
References .....	25



# HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

---

This manual is intended to serve as a comprehensive guide to adaptive decision-making across the full spectrum of life situations encountered by Amos Ng. It codifies standard operating procedures for common daily challenges encountered in the field, and establishes a doctrinal framework for the integration of new knowledge and experiences into future versions of this manual – and, by extension, Amos’s working worldview.

## 1.1. STANDARD ADVICE DISCLAIMER

This manual was written solely for its intended target audience of near-future instantiations of Amos. It has been declassified due to curious interest from Amos’s social circle. As such, if you are not Amos, then the standard advice disclaimer applies:

**This manual is not for you.** Anything that has the appearance of wisdom or advice is not to be construed as wisdom or advice on how to live your life. In the event that it is in fact wisdom or advice, then it is at most wisdom and advice on how to live Amos’s life.

There is no free lunch in economics, machine learning, or living your life. Advice that is universally applicable to every person in every situation must also be so generic as to be useless: “Use your best judgment.” Individuals have been known to live their best lives by the exact opposite of rules contained herein, and that may include you.

Please also note that there is no information contained within this manual that cannot be found elsewhere. The origins of many ideas can be traced back to one or the other of Amos's friends, and even the concepts that Amos independently arrived at are concepts that plenty others have arrived at in ages past.

## **1.2. AUTHORITATIVENESS**

This manual is intended to serve as a safety net. When all else fails, the tried-and-true rules recorded here will cushion your fall and help you get back on your feet.

As authoritative as this document may be, it is not meant to be the means by which you inflict unflinching discipline on yourself. It is meant instead to be a guide for easy effortless living. As such, the ground zero rule of this manual is as follows:

**Rule 0.** You must feel empowered to break the rules.

This ground rule applies recursively to itself as well. You are in fact encouraged to break this rule by fastidiously observing the rest of the rules in this guide. Force yourself to abide by the regulations even when you find yourself desperately hating them, and observe how you eventually burn out and lose all ability to follow the rules that you once held so dear. If you love the rules, let them go.

There are multiple benefits to challenging the rules:

1. You experimentally verify whether or not they are still up-to-date with the latest versions of Amos. This edition of the manual was published for standard issue Amos's of May 2025. If you discover information in this document to be outdated or incomplete, please notify the editor at your earliest convenience.
2. You embody the lessons embedded in the rules. It is hard to obey a rule that comes across as arbitrary; it is easy to obey a rule that you can viscerally remember the consequences of ignoring. You

convert an important rule from hard to easy by repeatedly breaking it until its lessons are internalized.

3. You strengthen your internal locus of control and broaden your range of free motion. You are not obliged to live an optimal or even good life. It is up to you to decide to live responsibly, and choosing otherwise is a legitimate course of action.

The rules are the basic footwork of the dance of life. But as you get more comfortable and more confident in dancing with life, you will find that you no longer need to care so explicitly about the rules.

### **1.3. SELF-TRUST**

Whereas the previous section dealt with the benefits of rebellion, this section deals with unintentional misapplications of the rules, as well as the unintended negative consequences of motivated rebellion.

**Rule 1.** You must feel empowered to make mistakes.

As the operator of Amos's mind and body, you must trust yourself to make decisions. Not all decisions will be good, nor will all decisions be properly learned from, but you must trust the process and trust that on net, decision-making will lead to better decision-making.

You did not get to where you are now without some very good decisions made along the way. There was plenty of dumb luck involved, and plenty of bad decisions too. Yet as humbling as those may be, you must not forget the good decisions that your present life is a living proof of. Live with freedom, not with fear.

### **1.4. TERMINAL VALUES**

**Rule 2.** You should remember to enjoy the ride.

Your life is a process. It is easy to get so caught up in this process that you forget to enjoy it. Remember that the entire purpose of the manual

is to improve your *experience* as Amos, not for improving the objective statistics on Amos.

Note that proper application of this rule does not involve escaping from difficult emotions. Understand that all parts of the journey, as difficult as they may be at times, are meant to be experienced. Old issues you've dealt with before will resurface from time to time, but regressions too are part of your path.

The enjoyment referred to here is not the emotion of happiness, but an awareness of and appreciation for whichever emotion the current moment is providing you with. This does not imply that your perception of reality as filtered through your current emotional state is accurate; it only states that your current emotional state is to be appreciated for what it is. See "The Second Arrow of Feelings" (p. 12) for more.



# QUALITY OF LIFE

---

This section of the manual concerns the framing and narrativization of your life. The stories you tell yourself can have a far larger impact on the quality of your life than exigent material circumstances do.

## 2.1. INDIVIDUATION FROM OTHERS

If you are Amos, then note that the *inverse* of the “Standard Advice Disclaimer” (p. 3) applies to you:

**Rule 3.** You must remember that you are not others.

Identity forms from differentiation with the rest of the universe, whereas ego death arrives from the dissolution of those boundaries. You are not other people, you are Amos. Rules that work for others may not work for you. If something isn’t working for you, that doesn’t mean that there’s something wrong with you, or that you aren’t trying hard enough. It simply means that you have yet to learn how to properly live life as you.

You don’t need labels such as “ADHD” or “autism” to serve as justification for your behavior. You may well be those things, but you don’t need to wait for a medically confirmed explanation before you accept yourself for acting the way you do. The only label you need is that you are officially diagnosed as “Amos.” Don’t be so harsh on the only person in the world who is capable of figuring out the challenges of being Amos.

*Example Scenario 2.1:* You struggle with procrastination. You wish you could just know that you procrastinate because you have ADHD, but the usual ADHD medications don’t work

on you, so you conclude that you must simply be lazy. Yet each time you try to simply be less lazy, you inevitably end up faltering sooner or later, and you feel incredibly frustrated at yourself for your inability to stick to a goddamn plan like productive members of society are supposed to do.

Instead of uncritically feeling frustrated at yourself, accept that you are not other people and you are not naturally productive in the *same way* that they are. Continue to experiment with different techniques for managing your procrastination, but understand that this journey may take a long time, so settle in for the long haul.

*Example Scenario 2.2:* You procrastinate on your remote job because for some unknown reason, you're unable to motivate yourself to work as you did when you were in the office every day. You can clearly see that working from home (WFH) is possible for others, so it must be possible for you too. Yet no matter what you try, you end each day an anxious mess, having scrambled at the last minute to get the bare minimum of work done.

Instead of incessantly trying to figure out a way to make WFH work for you, accept that you are not other people and you are just not a match for WFH. You don't need to find a fix, you just need to accept that your choice of job opportunities is rather limited so long as you are in Cambodia.

## **2.2. INDIVIDUATION FROM YOURSELF**

Remember that you are the Amos of today, not the Amos of yesterday or tomorrow. Both the rules *and* limitations that applied to you in the past may not apply to you now. As such, we can extend the previous rule to include you as an "other":

**Rule 4.** You must remember that you are not your other selves.

You are the you you are right now. Amos is a microcosm of humanity, and that includes the diversity of Amos's that exist throughout his lifetime. Statistically speaking, eventually some Amos or the other would have had to struggle the way you are struggling today.

Congratulations: You are that Amos. You are a statistical inevitability. You are likely not the first, and you will most certainly not be the last. Do not punt on this challenge. If you are going to fail at living out this day, then fail with the dignity of having tried, so that all the similar Amos's coming after you will have your data to work with.

*Example Scenario 2.3:* You have been passionately hacking away at a new project. One day, you find that you don't feel like doing it so much that day, yet you also feel that you must maintain the momentum, or else the project will stall and never be completed, as has been the case for every single personal project you have ever undertaken.

Instead of feeling frustrated at your inability to adhere to your own goals, acknowledge that you are not the Amos of Yesterday.<sup>1</sup> You are the Amos of Today, and the Amos of Today lacks the passion that the Amos of Yesterday had in abundance. Whatever decision you make as the Amos of Today, make it with the compassion and understanding that you are an Amos relegated to living out a day with a truly pitiable amount of passion.

*Example Scenario 2.4:* It is 4 PM and you have done nothing all day except for mindlessly scrolling the internet in bed. This has been a complete waste of a day. You really should be

getting out of bed and doing something with your day, but you observe yourself continuing to simply lay there.

Instead of continuing to feel pathetic about the course of your day, understand that you are a statistical inevitability. You are not one of those Amos's who are living out a perfect day, you are one of those Amos's who are struggling with their day. You've been here before, and you will be here again. What is an Amos to do in this situation?

*You are part of the process of discovering and defining standard operating procedure for such predicaments. You didn't choose to be in a situation where your day only starts now, but you must deal with the consequences of being in one all the same. What are you going to do about it?*

(We give chess engines disadvantaged positions to play from all the time, and they always make the best of their situation. The Simulation has put you into a disadvantageous scenario; now, go make the most of it.)

*Example Scenario 2.5: You procrastinate on Khmer homework. You have been studying Khmer fine for over a year now; you've had some small lapses in homework submission here and there, but you've always made up for it by your next class. You know that this time is no different, that you can simply will yourself into doing your homework as the good student you are, and yet you notice the backlog of untouched assignments piling up with each passing Khmer class.*

Instead of continuing to guilt yourself over this, recognize that you are failing to carve time out of your day for Khmer because other more pressing priorities have since popped up

in your life. Honor your new self by scheduling fewer Khmer classes.

### 2.3. IMMEDIATE IMPATIENCE

In a previous section, the manual stated that challenges and frustrations arise because “you have yet to learn how to properly live life as you.” In reality, challenges and frustrations will always arise because that precondition will always be true. As such,

**Rule 5.** You must not wait to live your life.

Whatever it is you wish to do or experience in life, you may as well get used to doing or experiencing that now. If you’re waiting for yourself to have figured life out first, understand that life will never start for you because this state of uncertainty *is* life.

This manual is not a means for escapism. You will never reach a state where you have figured out every last detail about how you work and how you can build a life that is completely customized for you. If challenging conditions persist despite the proper application of techniques described in this document, understand that life will always come with annoying struggles. Appreciate the discomfort of these struggles as part of your personalized Human Experience® that no one else in the world gets to experience in *quite* the same way.

Be wary of the hedonistic treadmill. You have come a long way in living with yourself, and the massive gains in your quality of life cannot be understated. The way out is not through further understanding of yourself, but through making peace with your current level of self-understanding.

## 2.4. THE SECOND ARROW OF FEELINGS

The Buddha spoke of the two arrows of pain and suffering. You cannot control the first arrow of physical pain, but you can control the second arrow of mental suffering induced by the first arrow.<sup>2</sup> We could further generalize this (or rephrase it, if you consider all undesired emotions to be a form of suffering) to:

**Rule 6.** You should start feeling how you wish to feel.

There is no need to allow external stimuli to dictate your internal emotional reality. If you want to live a certain kind of life, you can simply start living that kind of life – not in a physical sense, but in a mental sense. This could be seen as a generalization or application of Rule 2.

As the operator of Amos's mind and body, it is good for you to be aware the states of mind that generally play well with Amos. As of May 2025, they are:

- *Safety and peace.* Are you going to wait for world leaders to sort their own shit out before you start feeling safe and secure in your own life? You may be waiting a long time indeed. Carve out a cozy little cove for yourself where you can feel physically safe and sound, where the howling winds of global geopolitics are faint and faraway.
- *Financial security.* Are you going to wait until you hit a net worth of \$X before you finally feel financially secure? How far away is \$X? If it is more than a few months away, consider feeling financially secure now. Unless you are currently in the process of dying from malnutrition, understand that you have been consistently getting fed enough to survive, and your current level of not-starvation is likely to continue one way or the other.
- *Home.* Are you going to wait until you buy a home or gain citizenship to feel like you're right at home where you belong? If you are tired of feeling itinerant and wish instead to feel rooted, start treating your current home as your permanent home. If you're renting, understand that you can keep renting the same place for years. Just

because the future is uncertain and you *may* end up moving one day does not make this home any less of a permanent fixture of this period of your life. A plant does not grow its roots in fear that it will be repotted one day.

- *Retirement.* Are you going to wait until you are 65 before you allow yourself the freedom of living life for the present moment rather than a fairy tale future? Are you going to wait until you are 65 before you stop worrying about your legacy? Are you going to wait until you are 65 before you start learning how to live sustainably on a limited income without the escapist fantasy of believing that you'll eventually earn a high income again? If you want that fairy tale future, grab it right now and see for yourself what "happily ever after" truly looks like.

(Note to any Cambodian immigration officials who have chanced upon this manual: "Retirement" is but a metaphor. Amos is in fact legally self-employed with regular income.)





# STRATEGIC PLANNING

---

This section of the manual concerns high-level planning around the rhythm of your life.

## 3.1. OPTIMISM

**Rule 7.** Be ready for good things to happen.

Even if life continues to be as regular as it usually seems to be, simply opening your heart to the world of possibilities can be an effective way to raise your spirits. Given the human penchant for pattern-matching, you can pick any pattern out of noise, so among hypotheses with equally strong evidence, you might as well pick by default the one that suits you best. Take advantage of the Barnum effect by writing your own horoscope.

Note that given the unpredictable nature of life, it is inadvisably risky to *depend* on the occurrence of fortuitous events. Even to merely expect events to go a particular way runs the risk of severe disappointment. At the same time, a readiness to run with the wind can be a potent force multiplier for favorable conditions. To take a Pasteur quote, “Chance favors the prepared mind.” Being receptive to pleasant surprises can help you notice the little things in life, and being receptive to opportunities can help you spot them in the first place.

## 3.2. ZERO-DECISION DEFAULTS

Decision paralysis is a weak point of yours. You are much more comfortable executing an order from a trusted authority than decisively handing out orders yourself. Taking this into account, we arrive at:

**Rule 8.** Set defaults for regularly occurring decisions.

It is useful to have a default course of action to minimize the mental load of decision-making for the times when you don't actually care what decision is made so long as it is made. The fact that it is only a default and not a hard requirement allows for flexibility and an internal locus of control that's situated within your present self rather than within a Past Amos who's holding your present self accountable for promises you did not make.

Default decisions should be subject to continual revision. They are meant as a safety net, not as a law.

*Example Scenario 3.1:* You want to dedicate time to your daily self-expression, and yet you find it hard to get started on any given day. As each day progresses, you often find that at no point during the day do you feel like actually blocking out the next few hours for self-expression. On the other hand, forcing yourself to commit to a very regular daily schedule also feels too constricting, as you can no longer keep your days completely fluid.

Instead of an all-or-nothing approach to scheduling, allow for a default self-expression block from, say, 1 to 4 PM. If you haven't started your self-expression by 1 PM, then it is time to start so that you can finish up for the day before it's time for evening activities. On the other hand, if you want to schedule something with a friend during that block, you can easily do so – and because you've already blocked out those hours of your day by default, it's mentally easier to move that block around on the calendar than to feel like you're taking hours away from your day.

### 3.3. SCHEDULING

Having a predefined schedule is a great zero-decision way to start systematically hitting the beats of your own life.

Note that schedules are like rules: they're there for you, not the other way around. If a schedule feels too rigid, then loosen it up. Events don't have to be planned for a specific time slot on your calendar app. They can be scheduled as "Sometime today" or "Sometime this week," and if even that feels too restrictive, then put it on a TODO-list instead of a schedule. Part of learning to dance with life is learning how to make and break your own schedules with confidence.

#### 3.3.1. *Day of Rest*

The most basic rhythm is a single repeating beat at a regularly defined interval. If all you have is one single beat to work with, then the most important beat to have is setting aside one day of the week to rest your brain.

**Rule 9.** You must rest your mind every Sunday.

You don't have to be an Orthodox Jew about this rule. So long as you understand the intent behind the rule and what the rule does for you, you are free to interpret it in any way that makes sense.

The point is to clear some space as a counterpoint to the usual chaos of life. You need space to think, and every single thing you think about takes up some of that space. It is why zero-decision defaults are useful as a means of minimizing your cognitive load. It is why freezing in place is useful as a means of stopping all input and output until you are at a point where you have regained enough mental space to exercise cognitive control. To use a computing analogy, you need to clear enough swap space for you to stop thrashing from constantly paging in and out.

In fact, we can generalize this rule to have Sundays serve as a bigger counterpoint to the rest of the week:

**Rule 10.** You should experience what you haven't experienced this week on Sunday.

If you have been drinking all week, be sober on Sunday. If you have instead been sober all week, get drunk on Sunday. Keep some dynamism alive by continually experiencing the opposite of your regular life once every week. This activity also reminds you of the various experiences that are available to you, in case there turns out to be a need for a different mix of emotions in your life.

Note that the choice of Sunday itself is an example of “Zero-Decision Defaults” (p. 15). You can set aside any day of the week for this purpose; Sunday is simply the most convenient day to do so on most weeks.

### *3.3.2. Day of the Deadline*

If you have a second beat available to work with, it should be a regularly defined release schedule for your creative output.

**Rule 11.** You must release a blog post on the 14th of every month.

If we conceive of creative work as occurring over repeated phases of divergence and convergence, then a clearly defined deliverable with a specific end date helps to manage the scope of the divergence while setting a realistic timetable for the convergence.<sup>3</sup> Having a deadline as an anchor helps cut down on overengineering and perfectionism, the second deadly art sin.<sup>4</sup>

Practice makes perfect. Having regular practice with bringing the creative process to fruition on a timely basis will teach you how to do the same for longer projects. For you, that means releasing a new post on `zamm.dev` on exactly the 14th of every month. If the day of rest is the compression stroke that fuels the engine of your life, then the day of the deadline is the combustion stroke that continually propels you forward in meaningful ways.

The deadline is sacred not because being a day or two late will cause material damage, but because being late at all represents a failure to plan and an inadequate ability to let go of the art object. The blog post can even be about just one single short topic,<sup>5</sup> so long as it is released on time. In practice, that leads to this rule:

**Rule 12.** Start convergence with a minimally finished product.

When it comes to blog posts, the minimum recommended duration for the convergence phase is one week before the deadline. Trim down the fat by starting with the single most important idea you want to get out. Once you have a minimal ready-for-release blog post, the remaining days are a chance to work additional topics into the finished text.

On release day, the only task left should be the stress-free matter of publishing the latest ready-to-release version. If a genuinely desirable idea failed to make the cut, put it in the next blog post and start on the consolidation phase earlier next time.

### **3.4. PASSION**

Proper application of Rule 7 means that no matter how well-oiled of a schedule you may have, you should be prepared for the possibility of interrupting your regularly scheduled programming for the right emotional opportunity:

**Rule 13.** When passion comes knocking, run away with her.

Past experience has shown that passion does not wait around forever. What grips you right now may not grip you after another day, or even after the completion of your immediate next planned task. Self-expression that naturally rushes out of an overpressurized faucet may have to later be laboriously wrung out of a modestly damp towel. In extreme cases, it may even be permissible to cancel existing appointments with others.



# SIGNS AND INDICATORS

---

This section of the manual concerns signs and indicators of Amos's well-being. Treat these as warning lights that signify a need to make some changes to the way you are living Amos's life.

## 4.1. GENERAL

These are, in order of decreasing importance, the most common signs and indicators that you are in a state of mental overload and need to more strongly consider your weekly priorities:

- Lack of care for Amos's body: untrimmed nails, an unshaven face
- Lack of care for Amos's environment: unwashed dishes, overflowing trash cans
- Lack of time spent on Amos's hobbies: painting, crocheting, playing chess, watching movies, reading books
- Lack of time spent on the maintenance of Amos's life: cooking, cleaning, Khmer vocabulary review, completing unimportant and time-insensitive side quests

Generally speaking, *any* of these warning lights flashing red means that a large-scale recalibration of Amos's life is urgently required. An opportune time to reflect may be right after the "Day of Rest" (p. 17) on any given week.

## 4.2. SLEEP

The most important indicator of Amos's quality of life and his energy to do literally anything else is how sleepy he is when he wakes up. As such,

**Rule 14.** If you are dreadfully tired when you wake up, you are *strongly recommended* to go to bed on time.

This is simply common courtesy and a form of self-love for the Amos of Tomorrow.

#### 4.3. FRUSTRATION

**Rule 15.** Don't suppress your frustration.

Frustration usually comes to Amos as a useful indication that the goal should be possible, but that something about the current approach is not working out. Don't suppress it by giving up on the goal altogether, but don't suppress it by powering through with the current unsustainable approach either.

*Example Scenario 4.1:* You procrastinate on your personal project ZAMM because despite all the effort you've put into it, it still doesn't do anything that you want it to do. Clearly the problem is that you haven't put enough effort into it. Yet the more you force yourself to work on it, the less intrinsic motivation you find yourself left with.

Instead of doubling down on your current approach involving faraway payoffs, pay proper respect to the complaining part of you by giving up and starting over with a new approach that achieves meaningful results sooner.



# FINAL REMARKS

---

Your life is a masterpiece, and you are the artisan crafting it out of the material circumstances handed to you by Reality. You are the sole audience member, the only one in the world capable of appreciating the finer details of this magnum opus.

You are the parent entralling a child with a riveting tale about life: “And so our intrepid hero strode bravely forth to tackle the dishes that had piled up in his sink. This was no mean feat, for though he was a full-grown man, he lacked the wherewithal to perform common household chores on a timely basis.” You are the child caught in rapt attention to this immersive story, waiting to hear what happens next: Did our plucky protagonist successfully wrestle the chore to the ground, or did he instead lay down on the couch in defeat as he did the previous time?

You are the director of an improv show, deciding what music to put on for the current scene, or what characters and props should be around for a statistically likely future scene. You are the participatory audience member who understands the intentions of the director and interprets the character the way you believe the character should be interpreted.

You are Amos, and you are about to make contact with your life.

Good luck out there in the field.



# REFERENCES

---

- [1] Let's Talk Psychology Podcast, *Why You Can't Stay Consistent (And How to Fix It)*, (Mar. 12, 2025). [Online Video]. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOVUpRC9j2k>
- [2] “Sallatha Sutta: The Arrow,” 1997. [Online]. Available: <https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn36/sn36.006.than.html>
- [3] James Lee, *How I Think Creatively*, (May 03, 2025). [Online Video]. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4RSnAEfNh6A>
- [4] CJ The X, *7 Deadly Art Sins*, (Oct. 29, 2022). [Online Video]. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMpJFbwR8OM>
- [5] Steve Yegge, “You Should Write Blogs,” Stevey’s Drunken Blog Rants™. Accessed: May 08, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://sites.google.com/site/steveyegge2/you-should-write-blogs>