

Why We Make Mistakes

by Joseph T. Hallinan

A printable to-do list of the most effective habits from this book. Check one off each day you do it.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

⁰¹ **Pre-Mortem Every Important Decision**

Before committing to any significant decision, spend five minutes imagining it has already failed spectacularly. Ask: what went wrong? Force your brain out of optimism mode and into honest risk-scanning mode.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

⁰² **Build One External Checkpoint Into Your System**

Identify a recurring mistake you make. Design a simple external check - a checklist, a second pair of eyes, a waiting period - that catches it before it lands. The goal is to remove reliance on memory or attention.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

⁰³ **Run Devil's Advocate Before Deciding**

Before finalizing any important decision, deliberately argue the strongest case against it. Assign the role to yourself or someone you trust. The goal isn't to change your mind - it's to find the cracks in your certainty.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

⁰⁴ **Track Your Confidence vs. Your Accuracy**

For one week, note how confident you felt about key decisions, then check the outcome. The gap between your confidence and your accuracy is your personal overconfidence score - and your biggest blind spot.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

⁰⁵ **Keep a Lessons Log, Not Just an Errors Log**

When you make a mistake, write down not just what went wrong but what you were thinking at the time - and why it seemed reasonable. This is the version hindsight will try to erase. Record it now, while it's still honest.

MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT SUN

⁰⁶ **Single-Task for One Protected Hour Daily**

Choose one hour every day with zero multitasking. One task, no notifications, no switching. Track how this single hour compares in output and error rate to your split-attention hours. The data will speak for itself.