



Sarah Murphy-Kangas

## TEN TOOLS FOR EMBRACING YOUR FINITUDE

### From Oliver Burkeman's *Four Thousand Weeks: Time Management for Mortals*



- 1 Adopt a "fixed volume" approach to productivity. Keep two lists—one open and one closed. The open list is for everything on your plate, the closed list has ten tasks on it, at most. You can't add a new task to the closed list until one is completed.
- 2 Focus on one big project at a time. See it to completion before moving on to what's next.
- 3 Decide in advance what to fail at. Replace the high-pressure quest for "work-life balance" with a conscious form of imbalance.
- 4 Focus on what you've already completed, not just what's left to complete. Keep a "done" list.
- 5 Consolidate your caring. Consciously pick your battles in charity, activism, and politics.
- 6 Embrace boring and single-purpose technology. Switch your phone screen to grayscale or get an e-reader that makes it really hard to get online and browse.
- 7 Seek out novelty in the mundane. Plunge more deeply into the life you already have.
- 8 Be a researcher in relationships. Deliberately adopt an attitude of curiosity.
- 9 Cultivate instantaneous generosity. Act on your impulses right away—don't wait for later or wait to "clear the decks."
- 10 Practice doing nothing. If you can't bear the discomfort of not acting, you're far more likely to make poor choices with your time.