

100 THEMES

ABOUT THE EXERCISE

Is there one idea, concept, or word that if you focused on it for an entire month would transform your life for the better?

That is the practice of choosing and living out a Theme. With daily focus and attention, a Theme can transform both your lived experience as well as your day-to-day behaviors.

While habits usually focus on the quantitative goals in our life, Themes can help us grow in deeply qualitative ways. Even when we are not consciously aware of them, after choosing a theme our subconscious continues to work – integrating and helping us realize this Theme in our everyday lives. They are the answer to our questions: What is missing? How can I grow?

Sometimes a Theme comes from an area of pain or struggle, and sometimes a Theme aligns more clearly with an already determined dream or desire. Both approaches are valid and often deeply connected. As with all practices in your Monk Manual, the purpose of a Theme is to grow in fullness and peace. We invite you to complete the following exercise to arrive at a Theme that will elevate your thinking, and ultimately, your life.

We've also included practical Theme examples (100 to be exact) to help you in discerning what may be the perfect Theme for this specific moment in your life. You can return to this exercise throughout your Monk Manual Journey, as it's designed to support your growth in each new month, season, and year.



MONK MANUAL



THE PROCESS

A good Theme will orient you towards what is most important in your life.

Most of us desire to live our lives aligned with our core values, but this is often easier said than done. Themes help us accomplish this goal in a measurable and attainable way by anchoring us towards what we most desire.

By writing your chosen Theme every day in your Monk Manual's Daily Pages, you consistently re-affirm your desire to grow in that area and the importance it has in your life. This simple repetition can transform your life in two ways.

First, by focusing on your Theme every day, you will consciously make choices that better align with this ideal. Second, this repetition activates the help of your subconscious mind, transforming your internal and emotional landscape. Seeing that most of our behaviors and beliefs come from our subconscious, engaging our minds in this way will help create lasting and deep change.

Since many of these changes occur "below the surface" and without our conscious attention, this small daily step can actually create massive shifts over time! Even if you do not see results right away, we encourage you to stick with it and trust the process.

HOW TO CHOOSE A THEME

1. CHECK-IN

It is important to assess your current state before you choose what area you would like to change or enhance. This is a large focus of the Monk Manual Monthly Pages. If you have a Monk Manual, you can open it up to your monthly page now and complete your monthly priority list and check-in. If you do not have a Monk Manual, you can do a monthly check-in by assessing the different areas of your life: spiritual, work/vocation, physical, play, or relationships. Where do you feel strongest? What could use some more intention, focus, or growth?

2. WHERE CAN I GROW?

Once you've done your check-in, you may already see a Theme emerging. Ask yourself, what is one concept, attitude, or word that if you oriented your days or choices around it would help you on your path to a full(er) life? Perhaps it relates to a practical goal or a specific emotional state. Keep an open mind and notice if any ideas initially arise. If so, write them down in the reflection page provided later in this process.



3. EXPLORE THE THEMES AND CHOOSE

As you go through the following list of 100+ Themes, circle the ones that stand out to you. These Themes may resonate with you for many reasons, some may even align with your current area of focus. We encourage you to be open to Themes that are new and different, too.

Next, go through the 100 Themes again with another colored pen or pencil and circle those that don't apply to your life. Maybe they seem unattractive, lack luster, or like something you don't need help with.

After you've circled the Themes that stand out—and the ones that don't apply to you—make a list of all of these circled Themes. Include this second category of Themes you deemed irrelevant to you.

4. CHOOSE A THEME

This list of your circled themes are the areas of you could most benefit from growth and attention. This second category of Themes are actually equally noteworthy and powerful. We often repress or reject ideas that are associated with our unconscious wounding or processes. By looking at these rejected Themes with more openness and intention, we ask you to entertain how one or two of these rejected themes may actually be areas of your life you have ignored or deemed unimportant. How could embracing a previously ignored goal or aspect of your life bring you greater harmony and integration?

After you've pondered this question and looked at your list, you can narrow it down to what one Theme will be most powerful for the next month.

FURTHER TIPS

If you cannot choose one Theme, that's okay. Simply write a list of your top Themes. Refer to this list when choosing future themes or throughout the month to check-in with your core values. While we do suggest choosing just one Theme each month, many of our Monk Manual members make this practice their own by choosing multiple themes and alternating them each week.

We invite you to experience the freedom of making your monthly Theme work for you. Have fun and allow your Theme to evolve over time if it needs to. This process is meant to serve you and your life, not the other way around. View these instructions and the following examples as a starting point, not a limitation or prescription for your Monk Manual experience.



100 THEMES

GRATITUDE

Abundance
Contentment
Delight
Embrace Reality
Love

Celebrate
Wonder
Grateful
Reverence
Choose Joy

AFFIRMATIONS

I have enough
I am whole
I am grateful

SIMPLICITY

Slow Down
Less is More
Silence
Listen
Tranquility

Peace
Simplify
Quiet
Quality over Quantity
Create Space

AFFIRMATIONS

I am peace
I have freedom
I am enough

INTENTIONALITY

Courage
Act
Follow the Path
Create
Intentional

Be the Change
Openness
Let Go of Fear
Growth
Purpose

AFFIRMATIONS

I am courageous
I am clear
I take action

ORDER

Consistency
Discipline
Momentum
Declutter
Routine

Proper Ordering
Grounded
Alignment
Obedience
Preparation

AFFIRMATIONS

I am safe
I am grounded
I am ordered

GENEROSITY

Kindness
Gentleness
Serve
For Others
Do Good

Patience
Radical Generosity
Self Gift
Humility
Invest in Connection

AFFIRMATIONS

I serve
I am gracious
I am love



100 THEMES

RELATIONSHIPS

Compassion

Show Up

AFFIRMATIONS

Connection

Forgiveness

I am loved

Be True to Self

Ask for Help

I belong

Honesty

Positive Environments

I am valuable

Vulnerability

Impact

REFLECTION

Vision

Go Inward

AFFIRMATIONS

Wisdom

Clarify

I am lovable

See the Meaning

Follow the Story

I am full

Notice

Perspective

I am valuable

Awareness

Discover

PRESENCE

Being

Awareness

AFFIRMATIONS

Be Here Now

Embodiment

I am here now

One day at a time

Slow

I am loving awareness

Ground

Home

I am held by the present moment

Mindful

Curiosity

BALANCE

Moderation

Health

AFFIRMATIONS

Self-Care

Rest

I am deserving

Let Go

Flow

I am at peace

Self-Compassion

Cultivate

I choose ease

Play

Calm

TRANSCENDENCE

Surrender

Renewal

AFFIRMATIONS

Peace

Believe

I am free

Deeper

Sacred

I am loved

Hope

Liberation

I am guided

Expansiveness

Trust



BONUS THEMES

Listening	Renew
Transformation	Spaciousness
Atonement	Movement
Grit	Fun
Completion	Happiness
Fortitude	Awe
Mercy	Breathe
Change	Tradition
Be Brave	Ritual
Eternal	Accountability
Leadership	Structure
Lead by Example	Resolve
Significance	Commitment
Nourish	Decisive
Authenticity	Reframe
Be Positive	Non-Judgment
Nature	Community
Open Heart	Honor
Grace	Faithfulness
Faith	Integrity
Seek	Focus
Non-attachment	Intuition
Love over Fear	Boldness
Unconditional	Praise
Infinite	Whole
Beauty	Freedom
Acceptance	The One Thing
Self-Acceptance	Allow
Ease	Nurture
Harmony	Inspire



REFLECTION

If you'd like, use the reflection questions below to support your selection process and imagine the month ahead.

Write down the Theme or Themes you circled in the space below. Reflect on this list and journal on how they would be most helpful for your month ahead. Use this space to narrow down your themes and choose one. Your chosen Theme will be the one that best serves you and those in your life. Your choice may feel inspiring, empowering, but also a little challenging, as a good theme can gently push us out of our comfort zones.

If it's helpful, write about how you can bring this Theme to life in the coming month. How will it show up in your daily life? How will it influence your mindset, priorities, or choices? Will it change how you spend your time? How will it feel to live out this Theme? What benefits do you expect? Challenges?



BEING + DOING

The Monk Manual is a daily system designed for peaceful being and purposeful doing.

Once you've completed this exercise, share your Theme in [The Camp](#) so other Monk Manual members can share in your journey. If you get stuck, it is also a great place to ask for advice and find encouragement, especially if you are new to the Monk Manual.

IF YOU FOUND THIS EXERCISE BENEFICIAL, FEEL FREE TO SHARE IT WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

For more free resources, visit
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