

**zuzanna tries a life coach**

“All that separates you from being that effective person you envy is the implementation of an appropriate system.”

“But I’m such a disaster at finishing anything.”

“Commitment to a system is the first step toward changing that.”

“Doesn’t that require me to be someone who actually follows through with commitments?”

“Execution of the system will clear out those negative thoughts and allow you instead to progress through tasks with the effortless flow that jujitsu masters sometimes refer to as *mizu no kokoro*, or ‘mind like water.’”

“For me, the problem is more that I start projects with all this enthusiasm, but then I get discouraged and lose motivation.”

“Getting things done is not about motivation, but about finding the organizational solutions that will free up the energy you waste ‘working in circles’ or ‘beating yourself up’ and focus it instead on the orderly achievement of your ambitions.”

“Half the time I’m just sitting there paralyzed because I’m completely overwhelmed by all the stuff I’m not doing.”

“I used to struggle with everything you’re describing myself, until I perfected my system.”

“Just sitting there, trying to muster the will to push ahead on something, but it all seems so hopeless.”

“Keeping those color-coded to-do lists I showed you earlier was the first big organizational breakthrough for me.”

“Like, it’s hard for me to understand how a bunch of little red and blue stickers are going to—.”

“My life up to then was basically squandered to disorganization—ten years in three graduate programs with nothing to show for it except debt and disappointment.”

“Not to bring the subject back to—

“Only when my wife left me for a clerk at Barnes and Noble did I realize how fundamentally I needed to change.”

“Perhaps we could focus on—”

“Quite honestly, I don’t know what would have happened if he had actually been working that day.”

“Really, I’d rather we—”

“Standing there in one of the aisles—true crime, ironically—I looked around at all those books so nicely arranged and realized that effort and ideas only become accomplishments if you figure out first how you’re going to keep everything in *order*.”

“This has become kind of creepy.”

“Understanding that was really what put me on the path toward finding those color-coded to-do lists and, eventually, to becoming the serene, focused, and effective person seated before you today.”

“Very creepy, in fact.”

“What are you doing?”

“”

“We still have another half-hour.”

“”

“You’re using my ‘creepiness’ as an excuse.”

“”

“You know that if you leave now, it’s just going to be another example of you starting something and failing to see it through.”