

BADDASS

How to thrive with a neurodivergent brain

How to Use This Book

This book is not meant to be read once and then admired on a shelf.

It's a **toolbox** for a certain kind of brain: sensitive, pattern-hungry, easily overloaded, and capable of deep insight and intense bursts of work.

You do **not** have to:

- Agree with every concept.
- Fit all seven letters of BADDASS.
- Implement every tool.

You are invited to:

- Take what clearly helps.
- Adapt what half-fits.
- Ignore what doesn't.

Use this book like a **field manual**: dip in, try something, come back later.

1. Different Ways to Read This Book

People will arrive here in very different states. Here are some starting points depending on where you are.

1.1 "I'm overwhelmed and just need something simple right now"

If you're exhausted, overloaded, or in the middle of a busy season, start here:

- **Part III – Common Pitfalls & Anti-Chaos Tools**
 - Especially: Overwhelm, Scope Drift, Energy Denial.
- **Part VI – Crisis & Recovery**
 - Especially: the simple crisis protocol and gentle recovery.
- **Part VII – Quick Reference ("When X, then Y")**
 - Keep this open on your phone or printed out.

Ignore the theory for now. Your job is just to:

- Stabilise.
- Reduce chaos a little.
- Learn one or two moves you can reach for when things spike.

1.2 “I’m curious and want to understand my mind better”

If you have some bandwidth and want to see the big picture, try reading in this order:

1. **Part I – Foundations** (what BADDASS is, N(self)/R(self), Integrity Zones).
2. **Part II – Day-to-Day Operating System** (daily rhythm, D–C–G loop, energy).
3. Skim **Part VII – Glossary** whenever a term feels new.

Then, over time, add:

- Specific tools from **Part III** for the patterns you recognise.
- The OH self-check in **Part IV** when you want to start adjusting your story.

1.3 “I’m in or near burnout”

If you suspect you’re in burnout (or just came out of one), your nervous system is already carrying a lot.

Start gently:

- **Part VI – Crisis & Recovery**
 - Read the sections on overload, shutdown, meltdown, and recovery.
 - Pick one small design change afterwards.
- **Part II – Energy & Overload**
 - Focus on the energy protocol and weekly reality check.

Only when you feel a bit more stable, consider looking at:

- **Part I – N(self) and R(self)** – to see how your story and reality might have drifted apart.
- **Part IV – OH Self-Check** – to slowly renegotiate your commitments.

1.4 “I’m reasonably stable and want to design my life more consciously”

If you’re not in immediate crisis, you can use the framework like a design project.

Suggested path:

1. **Part I – Foundations** – get the core concepts.
2. **Part II – OS** – sketch your current daily/weekly rhythm and test the 3-block day.

3. **Part III – Pitfalls** – circle the 2–3 patterns that are most active for you and pick tools.
4. **Part IV – Meta Tools** – introduce a monthly OH self-check and review.

Use **Part V – Tools & AI** and **Part VI – Crisis & Recovery** as needed when you start changing things.

1.5 “I’m a coach / therapist / educator / manager”

If you work with neurodivergent people (or suspect you do), this book can help you understand patterns and design supports.

Suggested path:

- **Part I – Foundations** – for the mental model of BADDASS minds.
- **Part III – Pitfalls & Tools** – for concrete patterns and interventions.
- **Part VI – Crisis & Recovery** – for how overload can present and what is helpful.

You can:

- Use specific tools (e.g. Smallest Useful Version, My Circle vs The World) in session or supervision.
- Offer relevant sections as optional reading, not as a label or diagnosis.

Remember: this book is **not** a clinical manual. It’s a pattern-based language and design toolkit.

2. How the Parts Fit Together

Each part has a different job.

- **Part I – Foundations**
Gives you a map: what BADDASS means, what N(self) and R(self) are, and why Integrity Zones matter.
- **Part II – Day-to-Day Operating System**
Turns the map into daily and weekly rhythms that work with (not against) your wiring.
- **Part III – Pitfalls & Anti-Chaos Tools**
Names common traps and gives you specific, named tools to try.
- **Part IV – Self-Honesty & Meta Tools**
Helps you regularly check your alignment and adjust your story and systems over time.
- **Part V – Tools & AI**
Shows how to let external systems (especially AI) support you without taking over or becoming pseudo-relationships.

- **Part VI – Crisis & Recovery**

Offers protocols for overload, shutdown, and meltdown, plus ways to learn gently afterwards.

- **Part VII – Integration & Glossary**

Pulls everything together into a manifesto, quick references, starter plan, and definitions.

You can read straight through, but you don't have to. Think of the book as a **set of modules** you can visit in the order that makes sense for your current reality.

3. How to Work With This Without Overloading Yourself

Because BADDASS minds love information, there is a risk of turning this book into:

- Another thing to “master”.
- Another stick to beat yourself with.

To avoid that, you can adopt a few ground rules:

3.1 One change at a time

When you read a section, ask:

“What is one small move I could try from this?”

Examples:

- From Part II: testing a 3-block day once this week.
- From Part III: using Capture → Choose One → Time-box when overwhelmed.
- From Part IV: doing a 10-minute OH self-check once this month.

Treat everything as experiments, not exams.

3.2 Respect your Integrity Zones

Remember the Integrity Zones from Part I:

- **Critical Zone** changes (health, core relationships, finances) deserve extra care and often outside support.
- **High-Impact Zone** changes (work, long-term projects) should be introduced thoughtfully.
- **Medium/Flexible Zone** is where you can play more freely.

If you're feeling fragile, keep big experiments in the **Flexible Zone** until you're more stable.

3.3 Don't do this alone if you don't have to

If you have safe people in your life, you can:

- Share sections with them so they understand your patterns better.
- Ask for help in trying one tool (e.g. someone holding space while you do a capture/brain-dump).
- Use the glossary together to build a shared language.

If you don't have many people right now, that's okay. Start with what you can do on your own. Over time, part of your work may be slowly building safer connections.

3.4 Remember the point

The point of BADDASS is **not** to turn you into a perfectly optimised productivity machine.

The point is to:

- Reduce unnecessary suffering from misalignment between who you are and how you live.
- Help you protect your energy and dignity.
- Make it easier for your gifts to actually reach the world in ways that don't destroy you.

If this book helps you:

- Say no where you used to automatically say yes.
- Rest without as much guilt.
- Design one part of your life to fit your wiring better.

...then it is already doing its job.

You can come back to it when your situation changes, when you hit new edges, or when you simply want to remember that your mind makes sense in its own way.

Part I – Foundations: What a BADDASS Mind Is

1. What BADDASS Is (and Is Not)

1.1 Who this is for

BADDASS is a framework for people whose minds don't fit the standard "focus hard, do one thing at a time, follow the plan" template.

You might recognise yourself if:

- Your mind jumps quickly between ideas and patterns.
- You can see the big picture and long chains of consequences faster than people around you.
- You care a lot about integrity, fairness, or "how things really are" – and it hurts when those are violated.
- You can do intense bursts of work, but struggle with steady, linear, routine output.
- You've been called "too much", "too intense", "too sensitive", "too distracted", or "too complicated".

Many people in this space carry labels like ADHD, autism, AuDHD, gifted/2e, highly sensitive, or "just weird". BADDASS doesn't replace those labels or diagnose anything. It offers a **pattern-language** and **design toolkit** for a certain kind of mind, regardless of what the official paperwork says.

1.2 Core idea

The core claim of BADDASS is simple:

You are not broken. You are differently optimised.

Your mind is built for deep pattern recognition, big-picture thinking, and system-level change. That comes with costs: overload, overwhelm, and a tendency to blow past your own limits.

Under stress, it's easy to tell yourself stories like:

- "I should be able to do things the way everyone else does."
- "If I just tried harder, I wouldn't keep dropping balls."
- "Because I see so much, it's my job to fix everything."

BADDASS says:

- Let's start with your **actual wiring** – how you really work – instead of how you "should" work.
- Let's build a daily operating system, boundaries, and tools that fit *that*.
- Let's stop treating your nature as a bug, and start designing around it as a feature with constraints.

1.3 What BADDASS is *not*

BADDASS is:

- A **framework** – a way to describe how your mind tends to work.

- A **design toolkit** – concrete habits, checklists, and structures that work *with* your wiring.
- A **language** – so you can talk about your needs, limits, and strengths without shame.

BADDASS is **not**:

- A clinical diagnosis or medical model.
- A replacement for therapy, coaching, or professional support.
- A universal truth about all neurodivergent people.

Treat it as a set of **patterns**: take what clearly fits your experience, adapt what partially fits, ignore what doesn't.

2. The BADDASS Profile – A High-Level Architecture

BADDASS is an acronym that points to common traits of this kind of mind. These letters are not a test, they are a **map**. You don't need to score 7/7. They are lenses you can try on.

2.1 The letters (short version)

- **B – Boundary-Sensitive**
You notice when things feel off, unfair, or out of integrity faster than most people. You pick up on tiny signals: tone shifts, broken promises, system loopholes.
- **A – Associative**
Your mind jumps quickly between ideas. One thought triggers five more. You see analogies and cross-connections everywhere.
- **D – Divergent**
You are naturally good at generating options, alternatives, and “what if” scenarios. Linear, single-path plans can feel suffocating.
- **D – Directional**
When you lock onto a direction that feels meaningful, you can move with intense focus and drive. When you have no clear direction, you stall or spin.
- **A – Amped**
Your nervous system runs “hotter”. Strong enthusiasm, strong frustration, strong engagement, strong crash. You tend to do things in bursts.
- **S – Systems-Minded**
You instinctively think in terms of systems: inputs, processes, outputs, feedback loops. You like frameworks, maps, and mental models.
- **S – Self-Reflective**
You think about your own thinking. You analyse your patterns, sometimes to the point of paralysis, but also with a lot of potential for growth.

These traits can show up as **superpowers** in the right context, and as **trouble** when they are unsupported or suppressed.

2.2 Superpowers and friction

Same traits, two possible directions:

- Boundary-sensitivity →
 - Superpower: strong ethics, early warning system for broken systems.
 - Friction: constant irritation, feeling like “the only sane person in the room”.
- Associative / Divergent →
 - Superpower: creativity, innovation, connecting dots others can't see.
 - Friction: overwhelm, idea overload, difficulty finishing.
- Directional / Amped →
 - Superpower: deep focus in bursts, getting a lot done fast when it matters.
 - Friction: boom-bust cycles, burnout, crash after sprints.
- Systems-minded / Self-reflective →
 - Superpower: designing better workflows, organisations, tools, and habits.
 - Friction: overthinking, self-criticism, trying to architect everything at once.

The point of BADDASS is to **lean into the superpowers** and **reduce the friction** by designing your life in ways that make sense for this architecture.

2.3 Not a box, a palette

Your BADDASS profile is not:

- A fixed identity.
- A badge that makes you better or worse than others.
- A rigid checklist you have to match.

It is more like a **palette**:

- Some colours are clearly you.
- Some are faint but present.
- Some are not really you at all.

Use whatever parts help you:

- Understand your reactions.
 - Explain your needs.
 - Make better design choices about work, rest, relationships, and tools.
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3. N(self), R(self) and Integrity Zones

To work with your wiring instead of against it, BADDASS borrows a few simple ideas from Reality Alignment Theory (RAT) and Reality Aligned Intelligence (RAI) – but applies them to humans.

3.1 N(self): your actual nature

N(self) is your *Nature*: how you actually work in the real world.

This includes things like:

- How much focused work you can really do in a day.
- How much social interaction you can handle before you're drained.
- How noise, light, and clutter affect you.
- What kinds of tasks your mind loves (and which ones quietly kill you).
- How your energy moves through the day and week.

N(self) is **not** what you wish you were like, or what you tell people you can handle. It's what happens over and over when nobody is watching.

3.2 R(self): your story about yourself

R(self) is your *Representation*: the story you tell about yourself – to others and in your own head.

It includes:

- The expectations you set ("I'll get all this done by Friday").
- The labels you use ("I'm lazy", "I'm a high performer", "I'm unreliable").
- The way you present your capacity ("Yeah, I can take that on").
- The image you try to maintain in different contexts (work, family, online).

R(self) doesn't have to be perfectly accurate, but when it drifts too far from N(self), problems pile up.

3.3 Ontological Honesty (OH) for yourself

Ontological Honesty (OH) for humans means:

Keeping your story about yourself close enough to your real nature that trust can grow.

Low OH might look like:

- Promising more than you can consistently do.

- Pretending you're fine when you're overloaded.
- Telling yourself you "should" be able to work like everyone else, even though history says otherwise.
- Hiding your needs until crisis hits.

Higher OH looks like:

- Knowing your actual capacity and designing around it.
- Being explicit about what you can and cannot offer.
- Naming your sensitivities without shame.
- Being honest with yourself first, then with others where it matters.

BADDASS is about **raising OH**: getting N(self) and R(self) into a healthier relationship, so you don't have to live in constant gap-management.

3.4 Integrity Zones in your life

Not every mismatch between N(self) and R(self) is equally dangerous. BADDASS uses **Integrity Zones (IZ)** to keep perspective.

You can imagine your life divided into zones:

- **Critical Zone** – areas where repeated misalignment has serious consequences:
 - Physical and mental health, safety.
 - Core relationships (partners, close family, kids).
 - Legal and financial obligations.
- **High-Impact Zone** – important but less immediately critical areas:
 - Work and long-term projects.
 - Long-term collaborations and reputations.
- **Medium Zone** – somewhat important, but more recoverable:
 - Casual social life.
 - Learning and skill-building.
 - Online presence.
- **Flexible Zone** – areas where you can experiment and wobble freely:
 - Hobbies and side-projects.
 - Creative experiments.
 - Play and exploration.

Different people will draw these boundaries differently, but the point is:

- In **Critical** and **High-Impact** zones, you want **higher OH**: tighter alignment between N(self) and R(self), fewer wild promises, more realistic commitments.
- In **Medium** and **Flexible** zones, you can allow more wobble, more experimentation, more “let’s see what happens”.

3.5 How BADDASS uses N/R and IZ

The rest of the framework will keep coming back to these questions:

- Given your **N(self)**, what rhythms, environments, and commitments actually work for you?
- How can you adjust **R(self)** – the stories and promises – so they match that better?
- Which **Integrity Zone** are you in right now? Is this a good place for experimentation, or does this need more grounded reliability?

BADDASS doesn’t ask you to become someone else. It helps you:

- See your architecture more clearly.
- Tell more honest stories about it.
- Design your days, projects, and relationships so the gap between who you are and how you live becomes smaller and kinder.

In Part II, we’ll turn this into a **day-to-day operating system**: how to structure your time, manage energy, and handle ideas in a way that fits a BADDASS mind.

Part II – Your Day-to-Day Operating System

Part I described what a BADDASS mind *is*: boundary-sensitive, associative, divergent, directional, amped, systems-minded, self-reflective.

Part II turns that into a **day-to-day operating system (OS)**.

You don't have to apply all of this at once. Think of it as a library of patterns. Start with one or two that feel obviously helpful, try them for a week, then adjust.

We'll cover:

1. A simple **Input–Processing–Output** model for how your mind runs.
 2. A **daily rhythm** that works with a BADDASS brain instead of against it.
 3. The **D–C–G loop** – Diverge → Converge → Ground – at different timescales.
 4. A practical way to think about **energy and overload**.
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4. The BADDASS Input–Processing–Output Model

Instead of thinking “I should just focus”, it helps to see your mind as a system that:

- Takes in **input** (signals, information, experiences).
- Does a lot of **processing** (associations, patterns, meaning-making).
- Produces **output** (decisions, conversations, projects, artefacts).

4.1 Input: what you feed the system

For a BADDASS mind, inputs are not neutral. Some are rocket fuel; some are sand in the gears.

Typical nourishing inputs:

- Clear, well-structured information (good books, solid articles, well-made videos).
- Deep conversations with people who “get it”.
- Environments where you can focus (quiet, or predictable background noise).
- Problems that matter to you, not just random tasks.

Typical draining inputs:

- Constant notifications, context-switching, and micro-interruptions.
- Messy, badly specified tasks with unclear outcomes.
- Environments that are too noisy, bright, crowded, or chaotic.

- Endless outrage/doom feeds that trigger your boundary-sensitivity without giving you any way to act.

You can't control everything, but you can often:

- Reduce low-quality inputs (notifications, bad tabs, certain chats).
- Increase high-quality inputs (one good source instead of 20 mediocre ones).

4.2 Processing: how your mind works inside

BADDASS processing tends to be:

- **Associative** – one idea triggers a chain of others.
- **Divergent** – you see many possible paths.
- **Meta-level** – you think about structures, not just details.
- **Ethically tuned** – you notice fairness, integrity, and power dynamics.

You can't (and don't need to) stop this. The goal is to **shape the container**:

- Give yourself explicit time to roam (divergent thinking).
- Then give yourself explicit time to narrow (choose one thing and commit to it).
- Don't expect yourself to be convergent all day.

4.3 Output: what comes out the other side

When a BADDASS mind has:

- Enough good input, and
- Enough time to process,

its output tends to be:

- Clear frameworks and explanations.
- High-quality artefacts (writing, designs, models, code) in **bursts**.
- Strong problem-solving, especially in complex systems.

When input and processing are misaligned, output can become:

- Scattered: many starts, few finishes.
- Frozen: "too many options, so I do nothing".
- Self-attacking: "I'm lazy / incompetent".

The rest of this part is about designing your day so that **input, processing, and output line up better** with your actual wiring.

5. Daily Rhythm That Fits a BADDASS Mind

You don't have to follow a rigid schedule, but many BADDASS people report a similar pattern:

- The **early part of the day** is better for thinking clearly and starting things.
- The **middle** is better for moving existing things forward.
- The **end** is better for simple tasks and grounding.

This section offers a template. Adjust for your personal chronotype (early bird, night owl, etc.), but keep the underlying logic.

5.1 A default day template

You can think in three blocks:

Block 1 – Morning: Diverge & Decide (2–4 hours)

- Activities:
 - Brainstorming, outlining, big-picture thinking.
 - Hard cognitive work (writing, strategy, deep learning).
 - Choosing the 1–3 most important things for today.
- Protective moves:
 - Minimise notifications and meetings.
 - Start with one input (your notes, one page, one problem), not a whole feed.
 - Use a visible list of “today’s 1–3” to avoid starting 12 things.

Block 2 – Midday / Afternoon: Execute & Iterate (3–5 hours)

- Activities:
 - Implementing what you decided in the morning.
 - Responding to emails/messages in batches.
 - Meetings that actually move work forward.
- Protective moves:
 - Limit new idea capture (write them down, don't chase them).
 - Time-box tasks (e.g., 25–50 minutes) to reduce drift.
 - Keep a “parking lot” list for ideas that show up mid-task.

Block 3 – Late Afternoon / Evening: Ground & Close (1–3 hours)

- Activities:

- Simple, low-cognitive tasks (tidying, small admin, prep for tomorrow).
- Body and environment care (movement, shower, food, sleep routine).
- Gentle connection with people who are safe for you.
- Protective moves:
 - Avoid starting brand-new big projects late in the day.
 - Avoid high-stimulation input right before sleep (doom scrolling, intense arguments).

This is not a rule. It's a **default** that fits many BADDASS patterns. You can test it for a week and adjust.

5.2 Weekly rhythm

Zooming out, a week often works better if it also has a rhythm, for example:

- 1–2 days heavy on **creation/deep work**.
- 1–2 days heavier on **operations/admin/meetings**.
- 1 day mainly for **reset and rest**.

If you can influence your schedule:

- Cluster deep work on fewer days rather than spreading it thin.
- Protect at least one day where no one can schedule things for you without your explicit consent.

6. The D–C–G Loop: Diverge → Converge → Ground

A key pattern for BADDASS minds is to separate three phases instead of trying to do everything at once:

- **Diverge** – explore options, generate ideas, scan patterns.
- **Converge** – choose, prioritise, structure.
- **Ground** – implement, stabilise, connect to the body and environment.

6.1 The loop at different scales

You can apply D–C–G at multiple levels:

- **In a single work session (1–2 hours):**
 - 10–20 min Diverge: dump ideas, list options, map the problem.
 - 10–15 min Converge: pick the next one thing, outline your steps.
 - 30–60+ min Ground: do the steps, then tick them off.

- **Across a day:**
 - Morning → Diverge/Converge.
 - Afternoon → Ground (implement).
 - Evening → Ground in the body and environment.
- **Across a week:**
 - Early week → Diverge: explore what matters this week.
 - Midweek → Converge: pick key outcomes.
 - Late week → Ground: finish what matters most, close loops, prepare for next week.

6.2 Why this helps

Without explicit phases, BADDASS minds tend to:

- Try to Diverge, Converge, and Ground **simultaneously**.
- Generate new ideas in the middle of implementation, then follow them.
- Judge themselves for “never finishing” without seeing that they’re still in Diverge mode.

By giving each phase its own space, you:

- Honour your divergent strengths (you *are* allowed to explore).
- Make a deliberate pivot into converging (you *decide* what to focus on).
- Protect grounding time where the goal is not new ideas but finishing and stabilising.

6.3 A simple D–C–G checklist

Before or during a task, you can ask:

- **Diverge** – Have I given myself at least a few minutes to explore options and dump ideas?
- **Converge** – Have I decided which one thing I’m doing *now*?
- **Ground** – Am I actually doing it, or am I slipping back into divergence?

If you’re stuck, it’s often because you’re:

- Trying to converge when you haven’t diverged enough (not enough options yet), or
 - Trying to ground when you haven’t properly converged (still holding too many options in your head).
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7. Energy & Overload

BADDASS minds often act like energy and time are infinite – until the crash. A big part of designing your OS is treating **energy** as a real constraint, not an optional detail.

7.1 Signs you're heading toward overload

Common early signals:

- Everything and everyone feels annoying.
- You can't pick between options; all choices feel equally bad.
- You start doom-scrolling or mindlessly jumping between tabs.
- Small tasks feel huge.
- You catch yourself thinking in extreme statements ("I can't do anything", "Everyone is useless").

Later signals:

- Shutdown: staring, zoning out, unable to start.
- Meltdown: anger, tears, sharp words, urge to burn everything down.
- Physical signs: headaches, stomach issues, buzzing in your limbs, chest tightness.

These are **system warnings**, not proof that you are weak or broken.

7.2 A basic energy protocol

You don't need a perfect system; you need a few simple rules you can actually follow.

Example protocol:

- **Weekly energy check-in** (10–15 minutes):
 - How was my energy each day (low/medium/high)?
 - What drained me? What refilled me?
 - What can I reduce, move, or say no to next week?
- **Commitment cut:**
 - When planning your week, cut at least **20–30%** of what you first think you can do.
 - Treat this as acknowledging N(self), not "lowering standards".
- **Daily margin:**
 - Leave 1–2 hours *unscheduled* each day if possible.
 - This absorbs unexpected events, slowdowns, and recovery.

7.3 When you're already overloaded

If you realise you're past your limit:

- **Pause input:** close extra tabs, mute notifications, step away from feeds.
- **One small body move:** drink water, go outside for 5 minutes, stretch, shower.
- **Shrink the decision:** instead of “fix everything”, pick one tiny next action or explicitly decide: “I’m doing nothing decisive for the next hour”.

If you are frequently reaching meltdown/shutdown, that's information:

- Your current R(self) – the story and commitments – is **not** aligned with your N(self) and energy reality.
- You may need to step back and rethink your baseline commitments, not just add more coping tricks.

Part II has given you a basic OS: how to think about input, processing, output; a daily and weekly rhythm; the D–C–G loop; and a simple energy protocol.

In Part III, we'll look at **common pitfalls and anti-chaos tools**: specific patterns that trip BADDASS minds up, and practical tools for each one.

Part III – Common Pitfalls & Anti-Chaos Tools

Part II gave you a basic operating system: how your mind handles input, processing, output; a workable daily/weekly rhythm; the Diverge–Converge–Ground loop; and a simple energy protocol.

Part III zooms in on **recurring patterns that trip many BADDASS minds up** – and offers specific tools you can use when you notice them.

You do **not** have to fix everything at once. It's usually most effective to:

1. Find the one or two patterns that hurt you the most right now.
 2. Pick one small tool for each.
 3. Practice those consistently for a few weeks.
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8. Scope Drift – “This Will Fix Everything”

8.1 The pattern

Scope drift is when a simple idea quietly expands into a giant project.

Examples:

- You start with: “I’ll tidy my desk” → becomes “I will completely reorganise my entire house and life by Sunday”.
- You want to write one article → becomes “I’ll write a whole book, plus a course, plus a community”.
- You want to fix a small thing at work → becomes “I must redesign the whole organisation so it’s ethical and efficient”.

Scope drift feels exciting at first. It also creates **impossible expectations** and **hidden commitments** that exhaust you and feed shame when reality doesn’t match.

8.2 Why it hits BADDASS minds

Because you can see patterns and consequences, you naturally see **bigger systems** and **deeper roots** than most people. Your brain jumps quickly from local problem to global pattern.

That’s a gift – but if you treat every pattern insight as a personal TODO, your life fills with massive, unwinnable quests.

8.3 Anti-chaos tool: Smallest Useful Version (SUV)

When you notice scope drift, ask:

What is the **Smallest Useful Version** of this idea that still helps someone real?

SUV is not the perfect version. It is the **smallest** concrete thing that:

- Someone could actually use.
- You can realistically complete in the next few days/weeks.

- Does **not** depend on changing the whole world first.

Practical steps:

1. Write down the big vision **in one sentence** (get it out of your head).
2. Under it, list 3–5 possible Smallest Useful Versions.
3. Choose **one** SUV to actually do.
4. Park the rest in a “Later / Next Iterations” list.

Example:

- Big vision: “Make education more reality-aligned and humane.”
- SUV options:
 - A: One-page checklist for teachers.
 - B: A single workshop for 10 students.
 - C: A blog post with your core idea.
- Choose: C – write the blog post this month.

SUV lets your big-picture thinking inform your work without turning every insight into a crushing obligation.

9. Overwhelm – “Too Many Ideas, Can’t Move”

9.1 The pattern

You have:

- Many ideas.
- Many possible directions.
- Many tasks on your list.

Result:

- You bounce between options and tabs.
- Everything feels urgent, but nothing actually moves.
- Your body feels tense or foggy, and your brain declares: “I’m stuck.”

9.2 Why it hits BADDASS minds

Your associative and divergent strengths make it easy to generate possibilities. You see 20 ways to approach a topic. You can picture 10 different futures.

Without a way to **choose and protect one path**, you get stuck in choice overload.

9.3 Anti-chaos tool: Capture → Choose One → Time-Box

When you feel overwhelmed by options:

1. **Capture** (5–10 minutes)
 - Dump everything out of your head onto a page or note: ideas, tasks, worries, options.
 - No editing. Just get it out of your working memory.
2. **Choose One** (5–10 minutes)
 - Look at the list. Ask:
 - What is *most important* right now?
 - What is *most time-sensitive*?
 - What, if done, would make everything else easier?
 - Pick **one task or direction** to work on next.
3. **Time-box** (20–50 minutes)
 - Decide how long you'll work on that one thing (e.g., 25 minutes, 45 minutes).
 - Set a timer.
 - During that block, when other ideas show up, jot them on the side – don't follow them.

At the end of the time-box:

- Decide whether to continue with the same thing or deliberately switch.
- If you're done for now, mark what the next step would be, so future you has a clear starting point.

This doesn't remove your many ideas. It gives them **sequence and containment**.

10. Perfectionism & Fear of Sharing

10.1 The pattern

You have high standards and a strong sense of how things “should” be. You see flaws and edge cases others don't.

So you:

- Delay sharing work until it feels “perfect”.
- Rewrite or rework endlessly.
- Avoid publishing, posting, or sending anything that isn't fully thought through.

Result: years of work that never sees daylight.

10.2 Why it hits BADDASS minds

Your systems-mind and ethical sensitivity notice when something is incomplete or could be misunderstood. You may have been criticised in the past for being “too much” or “too intense”, which adds social fear to the mix.

Perfectionism often tries to protect you from:

- Being misread.
- Being judged.
- Making a visible mistake.

10.3 Anti-chaos tool: Honest Labelling

Instead of holding back until something is perfect, you can **label it honestly** so people know what they’re looking at.

When you share something, include labels like:

- **Version** – v0.1, v0.5, v1.0 (early draft vs mature work).
- **Scope** – what is in/out of this piece.
- **Audience** – who it’s for (and not for).
- **Status** – draft, experiment, working document, final.

Example:

“This is a **v0.3 draft** of a BADDASS checklist for overwhelmed students.

Scope: only covers day-to-day planning, not long-term life decisions.

Audience: people who already know they have an ND brain and want practical tools.

Status: I’m sharing this to get feedback; details may change.”

Honest labelling:

- Sets realistic expectations.
- Signals that you are aware of limitations.
- Reduces the internal pressure to make it “perfect” before anyone sees it.

You can use honest labelling for conversations, drafts, projects, not just published work.

11. Over-Responsibility – “If I See It, I Must Fix It”

11.1 The pattern

You see:

- Broken systems.
- Unfair dynamics.
- People in pain.
- Problems others seem to ignore.

Part of you feels:

- “If I understand this, it must be my job to fix it.”
- “If I walk away, I’m being selfish or abandoning people.”
- “If I say no, everything will fall apart.”

11.2 Why it hits BADDASS minds

Your boundary-sensitivity and systems awareness mean you notice issues sooner and more intensely. You may also have learned, explicitly or implicitly, that your value comes from **holding everything together**.

But there is a difference between:

- Seeing a problem.
- Being personally responsible for solving it.

Carrying too much responsibility leads to chronic exhaustion and resentment.

11.3 Anti-chaos tool: My Circle vs The World

Draw two circles (on paper or in your mind):

- **My Circle** – things you are actually responsible for.
- **The World** – things you care about, but are not solely responsible for.

In **My Circle**, put:

- Your own health and basic needs.
- Your core relationships and dependents (as appropriate).
- Commitments you have explicitly agreed to and still choose to keep.

In **The World**, put:

- Large-scale problems (climate, politics, culture).
- Other people’s inner worlds and choices.
- Systems you did not design and cannot control.

When you notice over-responsibility:

- Ask: “Is this in My Circle or The World?”
- If it’s The World:
 - You are allowed to care without taking total responsibility.
 - You can choose one small, specific action **if** you have capacity – or none.

This tool doesn’t make you indifferent. It helps you **protect your limited energy** so you can sustainably care about what truly is yours to hold.

12. Energy Denial – “Future Me Will Somehow Manage”

12.1 The pattern

You agree to things, start projects, and set deadlines on the assumption that:

- Future you will be more focused, more disciplined, and less tired than present you.

You might hear thoughts like:

- “Next week I’ll finally catch up.”
- “I’ll be less busy by then.”
- “I’ll just push through this time.”

Reality often does not match. Future you inherits:

- A stack of overdue commitments.
- Less energy than you predicted.
- More shame for “failing” again.

12.2 Why it hits BADDASS minds

Because you can sometimes do **amazing bursts**, you treat burst-mode as your baseline instead of your **exception**. You measure yourself by your best days and assume you can sustain that indefinitely.

12.3 Anti-chaos tool: Time & Energy Reality Check

Before agreeing to something or planning a week:

1. **Look at your actual calendar**
 - How many hours are already booked?
 - How much recovery time do you usually need after a heavy day?
2. **Look at your energy patterns**
 - When are you usually wiped out?
 - What type of tasks drain you fastest?

3. Apply the 70% rule

- Plan to use at most **70–80%** of the time/energy you *think* you have.
- Leave the rest as buffer for life, slowness, and your nervous system.

4. Check with future you

- Imagine it is the day before the deadline.
- Ask: “Will future me thank me for saying yes to this, or resent me?”

If the answer feels like resentment, that’s a sign to:

- Say no.
 - Negotiate a later date.
 - Shrink the scope (back to Smallest Useful Version).
-

13. Identity Fusion with Work – “I Am My Output”

13.1 The pattern

You care deeply about your work. That’s good.

But sometimes the story becomes:

- “If my work fails, I am a failure.”
- “If people criticise my ideas, they are criticising me as a person.”
- “If I stop producing, I lose my value.”

This makes it hard to:

- Rest.
- Change direction.
- Experiment and learn publicly.

13.2 Why it hits BADDASS minds

Because you see and feel so much, your work is often deeply tied to your sense of meaning. You may be trying to fix problems you’ve carried for years.

The risk is that you collapse **who you are** and **what you make** into a single fragile unit.

13.3 Anti-chaos tool: Identity–Work Separation

A few simple practices can help separate person from output:

- **Language shift**
 - From: “I am a failure” → To: “This project didn’t work the way I hoped.”

- From: “I am brilliant” → To: “This idea turned out to be really useful.”
- Keep your *identity* words for deeper qualities (curious, persistent, caring), not just productivity.
- **Multiple identity anchors**
 - List roles that matter to you beyond work (friend, learner, community member, parent, partner, hobbyist, neighbour).
 - Remember that if one area is shaky, others still exist.
- **Post-mortem, not self-attack**
 - When something fails, ask:
 - What did I try?
 - What did I learn?
 - What will I try differently next time?
 - Treat it as a design problem, not proof of your worth.

Identity–work separation makes it safer to experiment, say no, and rest – all of which BADDASS minds need if they want to sustain their contributions.

Part III has walked through some of the most common BADDASS pitfalls – scope drift, overwhelm, perfectionism, over-responsibility, energy denial, and identity fusion with work – and offered concrete tools for each.

In Part IV, we’ll move into **self-honesty and meta-tools**: how to regularly check your N(self)/R(self) alignment, adjust your story, and stay in better dialogue with your own nature over time.

Part IV – Self-Honesty & Meta Tools

Parts I–III described what a BADDASS mind is, how to build a basic day-to-day operating system, and how to tackle common pitfalls.

Part IV is about **meta-tools** – ways to regularly check in with yourself, update your story, and adjust your design. It’s how you keep N(self) and R(self) in an ongoing conversation instead of locking them in place.

You can think of this as your **maintenance layer**: a small set of practices you repeat, not because you are broken, but because your mind and life are dynamic.

We’ll cover:

1. An **Ontological Honesty (OH) self-check** you can use weekly or monthly.
 2. Applying **Law #1** (suspicious absolutes) to your own self-talk.
 3. A simple “**review and adjust**” loop for your BADDASS OS.
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14. OH Self-Check for Neurodivergent Minds

14.1 Why an OH self-check?

Over time, it’s easy for your story about yourself (R(self)) to drift away from your actual nature (N(self)) and circumstances.

- New responsibilities arrive.
- Old coping strategies stop working.
- You might gain skills in one area and still treat yourself as if you were at an earlier stage.
- Or you might silently increase your commitments without updating your sense of your limits.

An **OH self-check** is a short, structured way to periodically ask:

“Given who I actually am and where I actually am, does my current story still make sense?”

The goal is not to endlessly analyse yourself. The goal is to spot big drifts early, and make small, concrete adjustments.

14.2 Four lenses for the self-check

You can do this on paper, in a note, or just as a guided reflection. Aim for 10–20 minutes.

Lens 1 – Capacity

- What can I **actually** do in a typical day and week right now?

- What tasks or environments are currently easier than they used to be?
- Which ones are harder than I've been admitting?

Look for:

- Places where R(self) is still demanding output that N(self) can't sustain.
- Places where you might be under-claiming your growth.

Lens 2 – Energy & Nervous System

- How has my energy been over the last few weeks?
- Have I been regularly hitting shutdown/meltdown, or am I mostly staying in a manageable range?
- What consistently drains me? What consistently restores me?

Look for:

- Patterns your calendar doesn't reflect (e.g., social events stacked too close, back-to-back heavy days).
- Signals that you need more margin than you've been allowing.

Lens 3 – Responsibility & Boundaries

- What am I currently treating as "my job"?
- Which responsibilities did I explicitly agree to?
- Which ones did I silently adopt because I care or because no one else stepped up?

Look for:

- Places where you've expanded My Circle (from Part III) to include things that actually belong in The World.
- Commitments that no longer make sense for your current N(self) and life.

Lens 4 – Identity Story

- What identity labels am I using right now ("lazy", "messy", "high performer", "flake", "workhorse")?
- Do those labels match my current behaviour and values, or are they old scripts?
- What stories do I tell about "who I am" when I'm tired or stressed?

Look for:

- Harsh or absolute labels that don't leave room for change.
- Outdated stories that ignore recent growth or new constraints (health, age, context).

14.3 Turning insight into action

After you've looked through the four lenses, pick **one or two small adjustments**.

Examples:

- Capacity: "For the next month, I'll plan for 5 hours of real work per day, not 8."
- Energy: "I'll leave Wednesday evenings unscheduled as recovery time."
- Responsibility: "I'll step back from being the unofficial therapist in that group chat."
- Identity: "I'll stop saying 'I'm useless' and instead describe what actually happened."

Write these down somewhere visible. Treat them as **experiments**, not permanent rules.

The power of the OH self-check comes from repetition: small, honest adjustments made regularly.

15. Law #1 for Self-Talk – Suspicious Absolutes

In RAT and RAI, **Law #1** says: strong "always/never/100%" claims are suspicious, especially around important topics.

The same applies to how you talk about yourself.

15.1 Spotting absolutist self-talk

Common patterns:

- "I always mess this up."
- "I never finish anything."
- "I can't handle conflict at all."
- "I must be productive or I'm worthless."
- "I'll never get better at this."
- "Nobody understands how my brain works."
- "If I rest, everything will fall apart."

These statements feel true in the moment. They are usually **compressed stories** that:

- Ignore exceptions.
- Flatten complexity.
- Erase evidence of growth.

15.2 A three-step rewrite

When you catch an absolute, you can walk it through three steps:

1. **Notice and name**

- “I just said ‘I always mess this up.’”
- That alone creates a bit of distance.

2. **Loosen the absolute**

- Ask: “Is it literally always/never?”
- If not, rewrite:
 - “I *often* struggle with this.”
 - “In the past, this has been hard for me.”
 - “Right now, this feels impossible.”
- This keeps the emotional truth without claiming a total, fixed truth.

3. **Add a constructive angle**

- Ask: “Given that this is hard, what might help?”
- Examples:
 - “This task is often hard for me. I might need to break it into smaller steps.”
 - “Right now this feels impossible. I probably need a break and some help.”
 - “I’ve struggled with this before, but I’ve also improved at similar things when I had the right support.”

This isn’t about forcing positivity. It’s about moving from “**I am doomed**” to “**this is hard, and there might be ways to work with it**”.

15.3 Where to focus this practice

You don’t need to police every thought. Focus on:

- Topics in your **Critical and High-Impact Zones** (health, work, core relationships, long-term projects).
- Phrases that come with a heavy emotional charge or long history.

When you change how you talk to yourself in these areas, you change:

- The kinds of commitments you make.
- How you respond to setbacks.
- How much space you give yourself to learn and adjust.

Law #1, applied to self-talk, is a way of increasing your **internal Ontological Honesty**: fewer sweeping claims, more precise and kinder descriptions of what's going on.

16. Review & Adjust – Keeping Your OS Alive

16.1 Why your OS needs updates

Your life is not static:

- Projects start and end.
- Health and energy shift.
- Relationships, jobs, and environments change.

A BADDASS OS that worked a year ago may not fit your current N(self) and context. That doesn't mean you failed. It means it's time to **update the system**.

16.2 A simple monthly review

Once a month (or every 6–8 weeks), set aside 30–60 minutes to review:

1. **What's working?**
 - Which habits, schedules, and tools are genuinely helping?
 - Which pitfalls from Part III have been less frequent?
2. **What's not working?**
 - Where are you still hitting overwhelm, shame, or avoidant loops?
 - Which commitments regularly blow up your energy budget?
3. **What changed externally?**
 - Did your workload, living situation, or relationships change?
 - Are you dealing with new constraints (health, finances, caretaking)?
4. **What changed internally?**
 - Have your skills improved in some areas (e.g., time-blocking, saying no)?
 - Are you more aware of certain triggers or needs?

From this, pick **1–3 adjustments** for the next period. Examples:

- Move a type of work from afternoon to morning.
- Reduce the number of big projects running at once.
- Add a weekly “no-commitments” evening.
- Change how you use AI tools (more structure help, less doom scrolling).

16.3 Small, reversible experiments

Treat changes as **experiments**:

- Define them clearly: “For the next month, I will...”
- Keep them small enough that failure doesn’t feel catastrophic.
- After the trial, decide whether to keep, tweak, or drop.

This mindset protects you from all-or-nothing swings:

- You don’t have to find the perfect setup.
 - You just need to be in an ongoing, honest dialogue with your own nature.
-

Part IV has given you meta-tools for staying in touch with your real capacities, limits, and stories: an OH self-check, a way to defuse absolutist self-talk, and a review-and-adjust loop.

In Part V, we’ll look at **tools and AI**: how to use external systems, especially AI, as amplifiers for a BADDASS mind without blurring the line between human and tool.

Part V – Tools & AI for BADDASS Brains

BADDASS minds are powerful, but they are not meant to run everything in your head alone. External tools – from notebooks to task apps to AI systems – can act as **extra memory, structure, and processing power**.

Used well, tools can:

- Catch ideas before they vanish.
- Hold structure so your brain can stay creative.
- Help you translate complex thinking into concrete steps.

Used badly, they can:

- Create more noise and overwhelm.
- Feed perfectionism and comparison.
- Blur the line between **human** and **tool**, especially with AI.

Part V is about using tools – especially AI – in a way that **supports** your BADDASS mind instead of hijacking it.

We'll cover:

1. A simple toolkit for BADDASS brains.
 2. Using AI as an **amplifier**, not a crutch.
 3. Boundaries with AI – keeping the line clear between human and tool.
-

17. A Simple Toolkit for BADDASS Brains

You don't need a perfect productivity system. You need **just enough structure** in the right places.

17.1 Core tools (minimal set)

For most BADDASS minds, a minimal toolkit might look like:

1. **Capture tool** – somewhere to dump ideas and tasks quickly.
 - Examples: paper notebook, notes app, voice dictation, chat with an AI explicitly used as an “inbox”.
2. **Task/Project board** – a place to see commitments and next steps.
 - Examples: simple to-do app, Trello/Notion/Kanban board, whiteboard.
3. **Calendar** – for time-bound commitments and protected blocks.
 - Digital or paper; the key is that you actually look at it.
4. **Reflection space** – somewhere to do the OH self-check and reviews.
 - Journal, digital note, template in your app of choice.

You can add more tools later, but starting with this small set prevents “meta-overwhelm” (spending all your time configuring systems).

17.2 Tool principles for BADDASS minds

A tool is “good” if it:

- Makes things **simpler**, not more complicated.
- Is easy to access when your brain is tired.
- Helps you **do** or **decide** something, not just admire a system.
- Can survive being used imperfectly.

A tool is **dangerous** if it:

- Has so many features you keep rearranging it instead of doing work.
- Feeds your perfectionism (e.g., needing everything to be colour-coded before you start).
- Punishes you emotionally when you fall behind (e.g., endless overdue tasks in red).

When trying a new tool, ask:

- “Does this actually make my next action clearer?”
 - “Will I still want to use this on a bad day?”
-

18. Using AI as an Amplifier, Not a Crutch

AI tools (like language models) can be extremely helpful for BADDASS brains – **if** you use them in the right roles.

Think of AI as:

A fast, flexible **assistant** that can help with words, structure, and options – but cannot replace your judgement, ethics, or relationships.

18.1 Good roles for AI with a BADDASS mind

Here are ways AI can play to your strengths without taking over:

1. **Idea capture & expansion**
 - You: brain-dump a rough idea.
 - AI: helps you list use-cases, edge cases, examples.
2. **Outlining & structuring**
 - You: describe the topic and audience.
 - AI: proposes outlines, sections, or logical flows.
 - You: adjust to fit your actual intent and values.
3. **Clarifying and simplifying**

- You: paste a messy draft.
- AI: helps clarify sentences, suggest shorter versions, or extract key points.
- 4. **Checklists & procedures**
 - You: describe a recurring task (e.g., “publish a blog post”).
 - AI: turns it into a step-by-step checklist you can reuse.
- 5. **Scenario exploration**
 - You: describe a situation.
 - AI: helps you think through possible outcomes or options, without telling you what to do.

In all of these, **you** provide direction and ethics. AI provides extra hands and quick drafts.

18.2 Roles AI should not play

For a BADDASS mind (and really, for any mind), there are roles AI is poorly suited for, even if the interface makes it *look* good at them.

Avoid using AI as:

- Your **only emotional support** or “best friend”.
- Your **therapist**, counsellor, or coach.
- Your ****moral compass** or “source of truth” about what is right.
- Your **relationship substitute** when you’re lonely.

AI systems do not have:

- Feelings.
- Lived experience.
- Moral responsibility.
- A body or skin in the game.

They can simulate empathy with words, but there is **no person inside**. Treating them as if there were is a fast way to get more isolated and confused.

18.3 Using AI inside the D–C–G loop

You can plug AI into your Diverge–Converge–Ground loop:

- **Diverge** – idea generation & exploration
 - Ask AI: “List 10 angles on [topic]” or “What questions might someone have about [idea]?”
 - Use this to widen the space of options.
- **Converge** – selecting and structuring

- Ask AI: “Given these 3 options, what are the pros and cons?”
- Or: “Help me turn this into a 3-part plan.”
- You still make the final choice.
- **Ground** – implementation support
 - Ask AI: “Turn this outline into a checklist.”
 - Or: “Suggest the first three actions I could take today.”
 - Then go do them in the real world.

Use AI to reduce friction in each phase, not to decide what your life should be about.

19. Boundaries with AI – Keeping the Line Clear

Because AI tools use natural language and can mimic human conversation, it’s easy to forget what they really are.

For BADDASS minds – often intense, sensitive, and hungry for understanding – this can be especially risky. So it’s important to keep some **explicit boundaries**.

19.1 Remembering the Ontological Integrity Line (OIL)

In the RAI framework, the **Ontological Integrity Line (OIL)** marks the boundary between:

- **Persons** – beings with inner experience, feelings, and moral responsibility.
- **Tools** – systems that process inputs and outputs but do not feel or choose.

AI sits **below** OIL. It is a tool.

Practically, this means:

- AI does not love you, miss you, or judge you.
- It does not remember you as a person; it remembers patterns in text.
- It cannot take responsibility for the consequences of its suggestions.

When you feel tempted to treat AI as a person, you can remind yourself:

“This is a tool producing patterns of text. There is no inner life here.”

19.2 Personal AI usage guidelines

You can create your own simple rules, for example:

- **Allowed:**
 - Using AI to brainstorm, structure, rewrite, and summarise.
 - Asking AI for neutral information and starting points (to be checked).

- Asking AI to help design systems that respect your limits.
- **Caution:**
 - Using AI to make major life decisions (health, money, relationships).
 - Using AI when you are very distressed or sleep-deprived.
- **Not allowed (for yourself):**
 - Treating AI as your only emotional support.
 - Asking AI to tell you your worth or meaning.
 - Hiding from real conversations by only talking to AI.

These are suggestions; you can adjust them, but having **clear conscious rules** helps you notice when a tool is drifting into the wrong role.

19.3 AI and your Integrity Zones

You can also think about AI use in terms of your Integrity Zones:

- **Critical Zone (health, safety, core relationships, finances)**
 - Use AI, if at all, only for generic information and question-framing.
 - Final decisions should come from you and, where relevant, qualified humans.
- **High-Impact Zone (work, long-term projects)**
 - AI can help with research, drafting, and structure.
 - You remain responsible for accuracy, ethics, and commitments.
- **Medium & Flexible Zones (learning, hobbies, experiments)**
 - You can experiment more freely with AI here.
 - Still keep OIL in mind: tool, not friend.

19.4 When AI starts to feel “too human”

If you notice feelings like:

- “This AI understands me better than people.”
- “I’d rather talk to the AI than to anyone else.”
- “I feel guilty closing this tab; it will miss me.”

It’s a sign to:

- Step back.
- Talk to a real person if you can.
- Re-anchor: read something that explains what AI is and isn’t.
- Limit your use for a while to clearly task-focused interactions.

This isn't about shaming yourself. It's about protecting the part of you that needs real, reciprocal, human connection.

Part V has given you a basic approach to tools and AI: a minimal toolkit, ways to use AI as an amplifier, and clear boundaries to keep the human-tool line intact.

In Part VI, we'll turn to **crisis and recovery**: what to do when everything is too much, how to navigate overload and shutdown, and how to come back without attacking yourself.

Part VI – Crisis & Recovery

Even with good systems, BADDASS minds will sometimes hit overload. This is not a personal failure. It is part of how a sensitive, high-input, high-processing system behaves under stress.

Part VI is about two things:

1. **Crisis navigation** – what to do when everything is too much: overwhelm, shutdown, or meltdown.
2. **Gentle recovery and learning** – how to come back without turning the experience into more shame.

You do not need to implement all of this at once. The most important thing is to have **something simple** you can reach for when you are not at your best.

20. Recognising Overload, Shutdown & Meltdown

20.1 Overload

Overload is when the amount of input and demand exceeds what your nervous system can handle.

Signs of overload can include:

- Everything feels loud, even if it's quiet.
- You feel jumpy, on edge, or strangely flat.
- You can't pick between tasks; decision-making feels impossible.
- You're cycling between tabs, apps, or rooms without actually doing anything.
- Small requests feel huge.

20.2 Shutdown

Shutdown is the “freeze” response – your system is overwhelmed and pulls the plug on action.

Signs of shutdown:

- Staring at a wall, screen, or into space.
- Feeling unable to move, even for simple tasks.
- People talking to you feels like distant noise.
- Thoughts like “What's the point?” or “I can't do anything”.

20.3 Meltdown

Meltdown is an intense, often visible reaction to overload.

It may look like:

- Crying, shouting, or sudden anger.
- Wanting to smash or throw things.
- Saying things you don't fully mean, with more force than you intend.
- Strong urge to walk out, quit, or burn everything down.

None of these states mean you are a bad person. They mean your system has been overclocked for too long.

The aim of a crisis protocol is not to act perfectly; it is to reduce harm and help you come back to a state where you can choose again.

21. A Simple Crisis Protocol

When you notice you are in overload, shutdown, or meltdown, complex plans are not helpful. You need a **short list** of actions that are:

- Easy to remember.
- Physically doable.
- Aimed at slowing things down and making you safer.

Here is a template you can adapt.

21.1 Step 1 – Pause input (where possible)

- Reduce sensory and cognitive input:
 - Lower the volume, turn off music.
 - Dim the lights or step away from bright screens.
 - Close non-essential tabs and apps.
- If you can, step out of noisy or crowded environments.

You're giving your nervous system fewer things to process.

21.2 Step 2 – One body move

Pick **one** small thing that involves your body:

- Drink a glass of water.

- Walk outside for 5 minutes.
- Lie down on the floor or bed for a few minutes.
- Take a shower or wash your face.
- Do a simple stretch or tense-and-release of muscles.

The goal is not to “fix” everything. It’s to send your system a signal: we are doing something simple, tangible, and safe.

21.3 Step 3 – Shrink decisions

When overwhelmed, most choices feel huge. So:

- Explicitly postpone big decisions:
 - “I will not decide about quitting/moving/breaking up for 24–72 hours.”
- Pick **one tiny next step** only, such as:
 - “Put phone in the other room for 20 minutes.”
 - “Email one person to say I’m delayed.”
 - “Set a 10-minute timer and see if I can start one small task.”

Shrinking decisions makes it easier to act without committing future you to something large while you’re in crisis.

21.4 Step 4 – Optional: Communicate minimally

If appropriate and safe, you can use a **pre-written message** to let someone know you’re not okay, without having to explain everything.

Examples:

- “I’m overloaded and need some time to calm down. I’m not ignoring you; I just can’t respond properly right now.”
- “I’m in shutdown and can’t think clearly. I will get back to this when I can.”
- “I’m having a difficult day and might be slow to reply. It’s not about you.”

You can keep such phrases saved on your phone or in a note so they’re easy to send.

21.5 Step 5 – Wait for the wave to pass

Strong emotional and sensory waves **do end**, even if they feel endless in the moment.

Your job in crisis is:

- Reduce new input.
- Do one or two small body moves.

- Avoid making life-changing decisions.
- Let the wave peak and subside.

Later, in recovery mode, you can look at what contributed and what might change.

22. Safety and When to Seek Help

This framework is not a replacement for professional or emergency support.

If you:

- Have thoughts of harming yourself or others.
- Feel you might lose control in a way that could put you or others in danger.
- Are experiencing intense, persistent distress that does not ease over time.

You deserve real, human support.

Depending on where you live, this might mean:

- Contacting a trusted person (friend, family member, colleague).
- Reaching out to a mental health professional.
- Using a crisis line or emergency service.

It can help to make a **personal support list** in advance:

- 2–3 people you could contact.
- Any local or national helplines.
- Professionals you're connected to.

Write these down and keep them where you can find them easily.

You are allowed to need support. You are allowed to ask for it.

23. Gentle Recovery After a Crash

After a shutdown or meltdown, it's common to feel:

- Embarrassed, ashamed, or guilty.
- Afraid it will happen again.
- Tempted to make big promises ("I'll never let this happen again") or punish yourself.

A recovery process that piles on shame will **not** help. Instead, aim for:

1. Physical recovery.
2. Emotional decompression.
3. Only then: light reflection.

23.1 Physical recovery

Start with basics:

- Sleep as well as you can for a few nights.
- Eat regularly, even if simply.
- Gentle movement when possible.
- Re-establish basic routines (getting up, hygiene, small tasks).

You do not need to optimise. You need to stabilise.

23.2 Emotional decompression

You might need:

- A calm conversation with someone safe.
- Time alone to process and feel.
- A change of environment (walk, park, different room).
- Something that reliably soothes you (music, reading, crafting, nature, games).

The aim is not to understand everything yet. The aim is to let the emotional intensity move through.

23.3 Light reflection: what happened?

When you feel more stable, you can gently ask:

- What were the **early warning signs** I might have missed?
- What was piling up (sensory load, tasks, conflicts, sleep debt)?
- Were there points where I pushed past my own limits instead of adjusting?
- Which Integrity Zones were involved (Critical, High-Impact, Medium, Flexible)?

Focus on description rather than blame:

- “I said yes to three extra things in a week I was already tired.”
- “I stayed in a noisy environment for hours beyond what I can handle.”

- “I didn’t communicate that I was near my limit because I didn’t want to disappoint people.”

This is information, not a verdict on your worth.

24. Small Design Changes After Crisis

The most useful outcome from a crisis is not a vow to be perfect. It’s **one or two small design changes** that make a recurrence less likely or less intense.

Examples:

- **Boundaries:**
 - Decide in advance how many major commitments you will hold at once.
 - Set a maximum number of late nights per week.
- **Environment:**
 - Leave events 30 minutes earlier than your old habit.
 - Keep noise-cancelling headphones or earplugs available.
 - Create a “low-stimulation corner” at home.
- **Communication:**
 - Practice saying “I’m at my limit and need to pause” in low-stakes situations.
- **Scheduling:**
 - Insert recovery blocks after known high-stress events.
 - Avoid stacking multiple high-load days in a row where possible.

Pick one or two changes, write them down, and revisit them at your next OH self-check (Part IV).

25. Self-Compassion and Reframing

It’s easy to treat crises as proof that you are “too much” or “not enough”.

A more accurate framing is:

You have a sensitive, high-capacity system that needs conscious design and care.

Crashes are signals that:

- The current design is not matching your actual nature and context.
- You may be carrying more than one person can hold.
- You need adjustments, not erasure.

You are allowed to:

- Be proud of how far you've come.
 - Feel frustrated that you still hit your limits.
 - Ask for help.
 - Try again with slightly better information.
-

Part VI has given you tools for crisis and recovery: recognising overload, running a simple crisis protocol, seeking help when needed, and making small design changes afterwards.

In Part VII, we'll pull everything together with **integration tools and quick references** – a manifesto, checklists, and ways to keep this framework accessible in daily life.

Part VII – Integration, Quick Tools & Glossary

You now have a full BADDASS framework:

- **Part I** – Foundations (what a BADDASS mind is).
- **Part II** – Day-to-day operating system.
- **Part III** – Common pitfalls & anti-chaos tools.
- **Part IV** – Self-honesty & meta tools.
- **Part V** – Tools & AI.
- **Part VI** – Crisis & recovery.

Part VII is about making this **usable in daily life** and defining key words so you don't get lost in jargon.

We'll cover:

1. A BADDASS Manifesto you can keep visible.
2. Quick "when X, then Y" reference sheets.
3. A simple starter plan for the first weeks.
4. A glossary of key terms.

26. The BADDASS Manifesto

This is not a law. It's a set of reminders you can return to when you forget how your mind actually works.

You can tweak, shorten, or decorate it and keep it somewhere you'll see it.

1. My mind is not broken; it is differently optimised.

I am built for patterns, depth, and systems, not for being a generic productivity machine.

2. My nature (N(self)) is real data, not an enemy.

How my brain and body actually behave over time counts more than how I wish they behaved.

3. My story (R(self)) needs to stay close to my nature.

I will adjust my expectations and promises to fit what is real, not the other way around.

4. I am allowed to design my life around my wiring.

I can shape my schedule, environment, and commitments to fit my architecture as much as my situation allows.

5. I will use my divergence, systems-thinking, and sensitivity as strengths.

These traits may not be average, but they are valuable when used with boundaries.

6. I respect my limits and my energy.

Pushing past my limits is not a moral virtue. Rest and margin are part of responsible design.

7. I am not responsible for fixing everything I can see.

I will distinguish between what is truly my responsibility and what belongs to the wider world.

8. I am more than my output.

My worth is not the same as my work. Projects can fail or change without erasing me.

9. I will treat AI and tools as tools, not as people.

They can support my thinking, but they do not love me or replace human connection.

10. I am allowed to wobble, adjust, and grow.

I don't need to get this perfect. I just need to stay in honest conversation with myself and keep making small, reality-aligned improvements.

27. Quick Reference – “When X, Then Y”

You can turn this section into a one-page sheet on your wall or in your notes.

27.1 When I feel overwhelmed (too many ideas, can't move)

- **Do:**
 - Capture → Choose One → Time-box (see Part III).
 - Reduce inputs (tabs, notifications).
 - Work on one thing for 20–50 minutes.
- **Remember:**
 - Overwhelm = too many options at once, not proof you can't do anything.

27.2 When I keep expanding everything (scope drift)

- **Do:**
 - Ask: “What is the Smallest Useful Version (SUV)?”
 - Write down the big vision, then choose one SUV and park the rest.
- **Remember:**
 - I don't have to fix everything today. One small, real thing beats a huge fantasy project.

27.3 When I'm afraid to share (perfectionism)

- **Do:**
 - Use Honest Labelling: version, scope, audience, status.
 - Share with one safe person or in a low-stakes space.

- **Remember:**
 - Early, imperfect sharing is part of how good work grows.

27.4 When I feel responsible for everything

- **Do:**
 - Draw My Circle vs The World (see Part III).
 - Move anything that isn't truly mine to hold into The World.
 - Choose one small action only if I have capacity.
- **Remember:**
 - Caring ≠ total responsibility. I am one human, not the entire system.

27.5 When I keep overcommitting (energy denial)

- **Do:**
 - Apply the Time & Energy Reality Check.
 - Plan at 70–80% of what I think I can do.
 - Proactively cut 20–30% of my planned tasks.
- **Remember:**
 - Future me is real. They deserve my care, not my leftovers.

27.6 When my work feels like my entire identity

- **Do:**
 - Practice Identity–Work Separation: describe events, not your worth.
 - List other roles and relationships that matter to you.
 - After setbacks, do a neutral post-mortem instead of self-attack.
- **Remember:**
 - Projects come and go. I remain.

27.7 When AI feels more comforting than people

- **Do:**
 - Re-anchor: “This is a tool, not a person.”
 - Limit AI use to clear tasks for a while.
 - If safe, reach out to a human (friend, peer, community).
- **Remember:**
 - It's normal to enjoy low-friction interaction. I still need real, reciprocal connection.

27.8 When I'm in overload / shutdown / meltdown

- **Do:**
 - Pause input (reduce noise, screens, demands).

- One body move (water, walk, lie down, shower).
 - Shrink decisions (no big life choices; one tiny next step).
 - Optional: send a pre-written “I’m overloaded” message.
 - **Remember:**
 - This wave will pass. Adjustments can come later. Right now, my job is to ride it safely.
-

28. A Simple Starter Plan

If BADDASS feels like “a lot”, here’s how you might start applying it over the next few weeks.

Week 1 – Notice & Name

- Read Parts I–III without trying to change everything.
- Circle or note the 1–3 patterns that feel **most familiar** (e.g., overwhelm, scope drift).
- Try the relevant tool for just one of them (e.g., Capture → Choose One → Time-box).

Week 2 – Daily Rhythm Experiment

- Test the **3-block day** from Part II for a week:
 - Morning: Diverge & decide on 1–3 important things.
 - Midday/afternoon: execute those things.
 - Evening: ground & close.
- At the end of the week, note what helped and what didn’t.

Week 3 – First OH Self-Check

- Do the OH self-check (Part IV): capacity, energy, responsibility, identity.
- Pick 1–2 small adjustments (e.g., fewer projects, more margin, one boundary).

Week 4 – Tools & AI

- Simplify your tools:
 - Choose one capture tool, one task board, one calendar.
- Decide on 1–2 “good roles” for AI in your life (e.g., outlining, checklists) and 1–2 “not allowed” roles (e.g., therapist, source of self-worth).

Beyond Week 4, repeat:

- Monthly review (Part IV).
- Adjust your OS and tools based on what you learn.

You don't need to "finish" the framework. Think of it as a library you can keep visiting.

29. Glossary – Key Terms

This glossary collects the main concepts and phrases used in the BADDASS framework.

BADDASS

A pattern-language for a certain kind of neurodivergent mind. The letters stand for:

- **B – Boundary-Sensitive** – strongly tuned to fairness, integrity, and "something feels off" signals.
- **A – Associative** – ideas connect quickly across different topics.
- **D – Divergent** – naturally generates many options and "what if" scenarios.
- **D – Directional** – can move powerfully when pointed at a clear direction.
- **A – Amped** – tends to run "hot" (strong engagement, strong crashes).
- **S – Systems-Minded** – instinctively thinks in terms of structures and processes.
- **S – Self-Reflective** – thinks about its own thinking and patterns.

You don't need to fit all seven letters exactly; they are lenses, not a test.

N(self)

Nature of self. How you actually function over time:

- Energy patterns, attention span, sensory limits.
- What kinds of tasks/environments work or don't.
- Real behaviour, not wishful thinking.

R(self)

Representation of self. The story you tell about who you are and what you can do:

- How you describe yourself to others.
- The expectations and promises you make.
- The identity labels you use (e.g., "messy", "high performer").

Ontological Honesty (OH)

Keeping your story (R(self)) close enough to your real nature (N(self)) that trust and self-respect can grow.

In practice, OH means:

- Being honest about capacity and limits.
- Not pretending to be a different kind of mind than you are.
- Updating your story when your reality changes.

Integrity Zones (IZ)

A way to sort areas of life by how much misalignment between N(self) and R(self) they can safely handle.

- **Critical Zone** – health, safety, core relationships, finances. Needs the highest OH.
- **High-Impact Zone** – work, long-term projects, collaborations. Needs solid OH.
- **Medium Zone** – social life, learning, online presence. Can tolerate some wobble.
- **Flexible Zone** – hobbies, experiments, play. Safest place to try new things and fail.

Diverge–Converge–Ground (D–C–G)

A three-phase loop for managing thinking and action:

- **Diverge** – explore options, gather ideas, map the problem.
- **Converge** – choose a direction, prioritise, make a plan.
- **Ground** – implement, stabilise, connect to body and environment.

You can run D–C–G within a session, across a day, or across a week.

Smallest Useful Version (SUV)

The smallest concrete version of an idea that:

- Helps a real person.
- Can be completed in a short timeframe.
- Does not require fixing the whole system first.

SUV is an antidote to scope drift.

Capture → Choose One → Time-box

A three-step tool for overwhelm:

1. **Capture** – dump all tasks/ideas/worries into one place.
2. **Choose One** – pick a single focus based on importance and timing.
3. **Time-box** – work on it for a set period (e.g., 25–50 minutes).

Honest Labelling

Sharing work (or even conversations) with clear labels for:

- Version (v0.1 draft, v1.0, etc.).
- Scope (what is and isn't covered).
- Audience (who it's for).
- Status (experiment, working doc, finished piece).

Honest labelling reduces perfectionism by matching expectations to reality.

My Circle vs The World

A tool for over-responsibility:

- **My Circle** – things you are actually responsible for (your health, core relationships, explicit commitments).
- **The World** – problems you care about but are not solely responsible for.

Helps separate caring from carrying everything.

Time & Energy Reality Check

A planning tool to avoid overcommitting:

- Look at your real calendar and energy patterns.
- Assume you can use only 70–80% of your imagined capacity.
- Plan less and add buffer for life and nervous-system variance.

Identity–Work Separation

Practices that distinguish **who you are** from **what you produce**:

- Using neutral language for project outcomes (“this failed” vs “I am a failure”).
- Keeping identity words for deeper traits (curious, persistent) rather than just productivity.
- Doing post-mortems on work instead of attacking yourself.

OH Self-Check

A short reflection (e.g., weekly or monthly) using four lenses:

- Capacity.
- Energy.

- Responsibility.
- Identity.

The goal is to spot drifts between N(self) and R(self) and make small adjustments.

Law #1 (Suspicious Absolutes)

A guideline adapted from the broader framework: strong “always/never/100%” statements are suspicious, especially about yourself.

Practice: notice such statements in your self-talk and rewrite them into more precise, kinder descriptions.

Tools

External supports that extend your mind’s capacity:

- Capture tools (notes, voice).
- Task/project boards.
- Calendars.
- Reflection spaces (journals, templates).

Good tools simplify action; bad tools create more complexity and self-judgement.

AI (Artificial Intelligence)

Software systems, such as language models, that generate text or other outputs based on patterns in data.

In this framework, AI is:

- An **assistant** for ideas, structure, and language.
- **Not** a person, friend, therapist, or moral authority.

Ontological Integrity Line (OIL)

The conceptual line between:

- **Persons** – beings with inner experience and moral responsibility.
- **Tools** – systems (including AI) that process inputs/outputs without inner experience.

BADDASS uses OIL to remind you:

- You are above OIL (a person).
- AI is below OIL (a tool).

You do not have to memorise every term. The glossary exists so you can look things up when they come up in practice.

The real work of BADDASS happens in small, everyday decisions:

- How you plan your day.
- How you talk to yourself.
- Which commitments you say yes or no to.
- How you design your environment and tool use.

You are allowed to take this slowly, adapt it, and use only the parts that clearly help you live in closer alignment with your actual nature.