

Welcome to the latest edition of *The Best Ideas of the Month*, where you'll find my rundown of the month's smartest articles on becoming healthier, happier, and more productive.

In today's issue, you'll discover how to sound more powerful at work, the secret to solving problems more quickly, and the ideal distribution of work friends to close friends.

Here they are—the best pieces I read this April.

PRODUCTIVITY

[These 7 Phrases Can Help You Sound More Powerful at Work](#)

When declining a request at work, instead of saying “I can’t,” try leading with, “Here’s what I can do...” It sets a boundary while helping you seem collaborative, making you look like a team player in the process. You’ll find 6 equally useful recommendations in this article. (*Source: Fast Company*)

[To Find Clever Solutions, Think Subtraction](#)

Stuck on a problem you can’t seem to solve? You may be overlooking “subtractive solutions”—ideas that involve taking something away instead of adding something new. Research has found that people often don’t consider these solutions, even though they’re often more effective. (*Source: Ars Technica*)

[Zoom Burnout Is Real, and It’s Worse for Women](#)

We’ve all felt the effects of too many video calls. Now, new research from Stanford suggests women are impacted more significantly than men. This article explores two potential reasons why and what can be done to fix it. (*Source: New York Times*)

HEALTH

[How Long Does It Take to Put on Muscle?](#)

Starting a new fitness routine can feel like a daunting undertaking, and it helps to know what to expect in terms of results. Here’s a simple timeline: You’ll start to get stronger after a few workouts, and you should start to notice visible muscle gains in about three months. (*Source: Art of Manliness*)

[This is What Happens to Your Eyes When You Stare at Screens All Day](#)

Staring at screens all day can strain your eyes, leading to headaches and other unpleasant side effects. To avoid them, give the “20-20-20” rule a try. Simply take a 20-second break from work every 20 minutes, and use that time to look at an object 20 feet away. (*Source: Lifehacker*)

HAPPINESS

[How Covid Can Change Your Personality](#)

Humans tend to become more calm and confident as they age but, a pandemic can change that. This article explores the emotional and social challenges many of us are dealing with—and it offers a hopeful outlook for the rest of the year. (*Source: New York Times*)

[Not All “Best Friends” Are Created Equal](#)

The average American adult has around 16 friends. But there are three different kinds of friends, and it’s important to have a healthy distribution. If you know a lot of people but feel unfulfilled socially, give this article a read. (*Source: The Atlantic*)

[How Kindness Fits Into a Happy Life](#)

Being kind to others isn’t just good for them. Research suggests it’s beneficial for you too. In a recent study, practicing kindness was associated with higher well-being—and just think of the relational benefits kindness can produce. (*Source: Greater Good*)

Thanks for reading. Here’s to a productive month ahead!

All the best,
Ron

P.S. For more game-changing insights on succeeding faster, check out my upcoming book, [Decoding Greatness](#).

P.P.S. If you were forwarded this newsletter from a friend or colleague, and you’d like to receive it in the future, you can [sign up here](#).