



SELF LEADERSHIP IN A VUCA WORLD

CONCLUDING THE EMBA JOURNEY

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1 VUCA World

The VUCA World

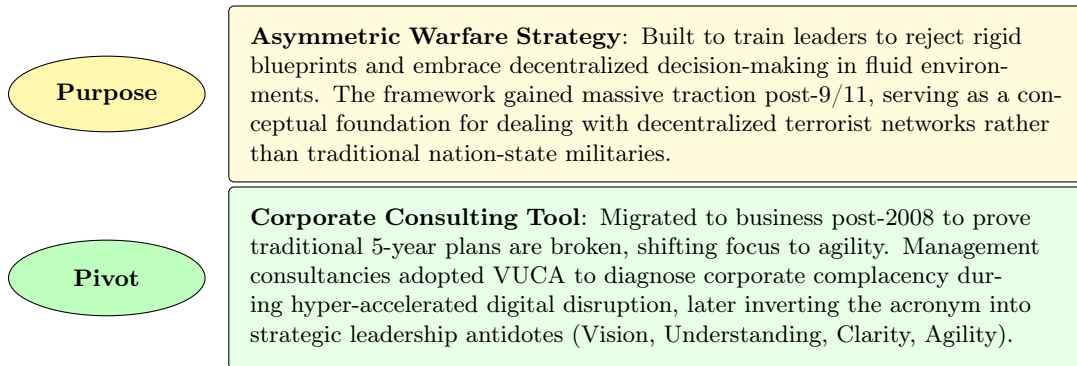
Environmental Challenges

V	Volatile: Unstable, fast-changing, and unpredictable market or environmental dynamics.
U	Uncertain: Complex cause-and-effect relationships that result in a total lack of predictability.
C	Complex: An overwhelming number of interacting variables, causing chaos and confusion.
A	Ambiguous: Unknown outcomes with hazy operational meanings and a lack of historical precedents.

The VUCA World

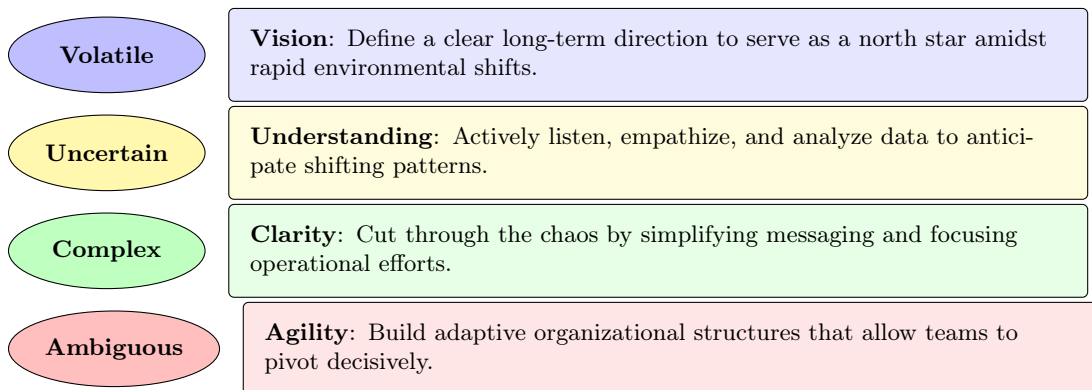
Origins and Evolution

Origin	U.S. Army War College (1987): Coined to describe the volatile, asymmetric geopolitical landscape at the end of the Cold War. Developed to move military doctrine away from predictable, static battlefield checklists and train leaders to remain operational amidst chaotic, unprecedented tactical environments.
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Navigating the VUCA World

The Leadership Antidotes



Why that timeline

- discovery 1987
- use in post 2008

2 The Great Cycles of Capitalism

The steam engine provides power for factories and fuelled unprecedented economic growth

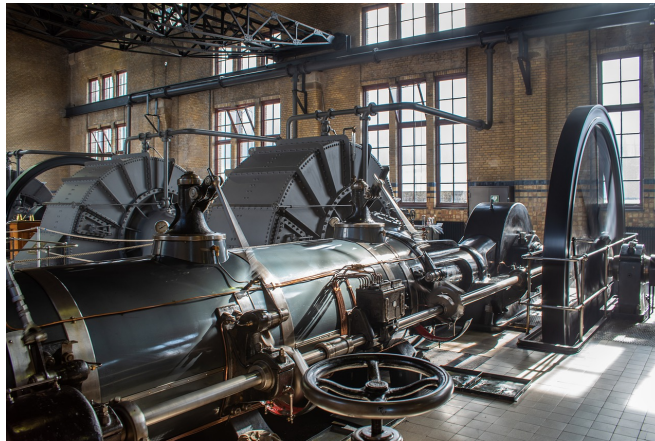


Figure 1: Steam Engine in factory — image by Kobus van Leer from pixabay.com

The Steam Engine

Key dates

Prelude	• 1551 & 1629: Taqi al-Din and Giovanni Branca first ideas • 1698: Thomas Savery invents the steam pump • 1712: Thomas Newcomen builds a practical atmospheric engine
Spark	1765: James Watt innovates with the separate condenser
Growth	Explosive industrial and economic growth since the early 1800s, reshaping global labor markets
Exhaust	“The Panic of 1857”, 1866, and “The Panic of 1873” which initiated the “Long Depression” – (Karl Marx writes “Das Kapital” in 1867)

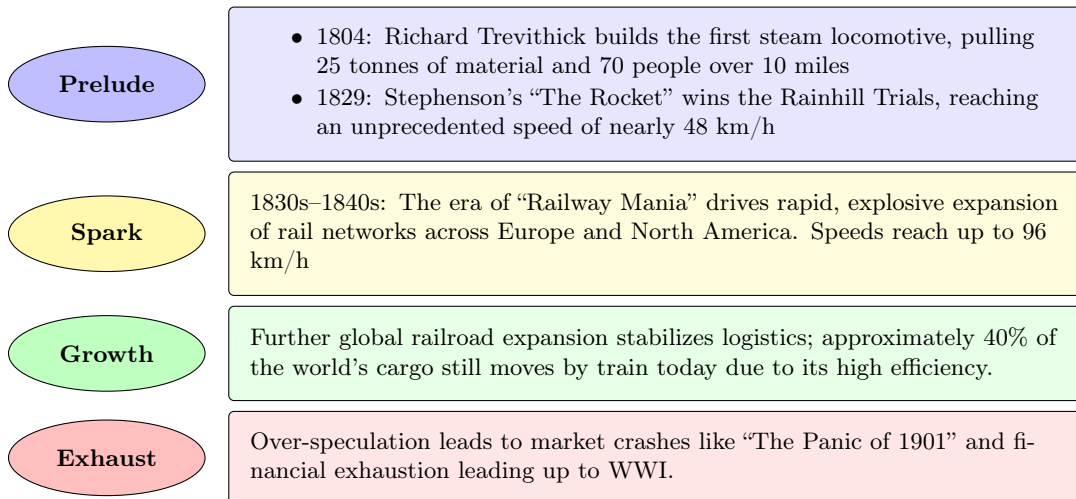
The Train



Figure 2: The Train provided reliable mass transport — image Image by Erich Westendarp from [pixabay.com](https://www.pixabay.com)

The Train

Key Dates



The Internal Combustion Engine, Electricity and Magnetism

Fuelled exponential economic growth and provided individual transport



Figure 3: The internal combustion engine gave rise to reliable individual transport — image by S. Hermann & F. Richter from pixabay.com. Electricity and Magnetism provided lightbulbs, radio, and all kinds of powered appliances — image by PublicDomainPictures from pixabay.com

The Internal Combustion Engine, Electricity & Magnetism

Key Dates

Prelude	• 1805: Humphry Davy invents the “carbon arc” lamp • 1832: William Sturgeon the first DC electric motor • 1885: Karl Benz the first practical gasoline-powered automobile
Spark	1908: Henry Ford introduces the Model T, initiating the age of affordable mass motorization and assembly-line manufacturing.
Growth	Widespread electrification and mastery of electromagnetism drive rapid automation, transforming operations both at home and in the factory.
Exhaust	The “Wall Street Crash of 1929” triggers the global “Great Depression,” setting off socioeconomic instability that ultimately culminates in WWII.

Automobiles and the Petro-Chemical Industry

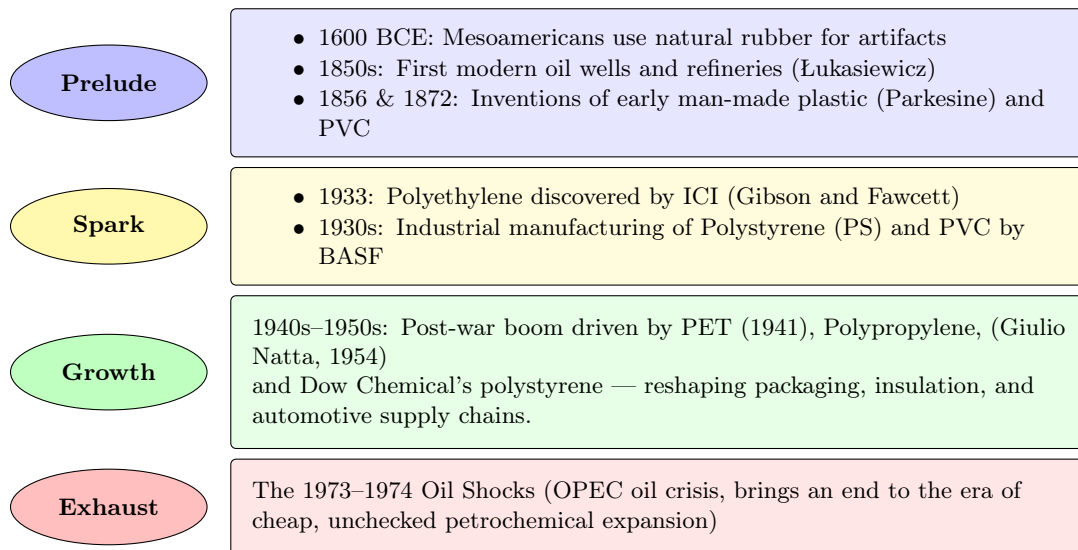
Fuelled exponential economic growth



Figure 4: The petro-chemical industry — image by Frauke Feind from pixabay.com

Automobiles and the Petro-Chemical Industry

Key Dates



The Electronic Computer

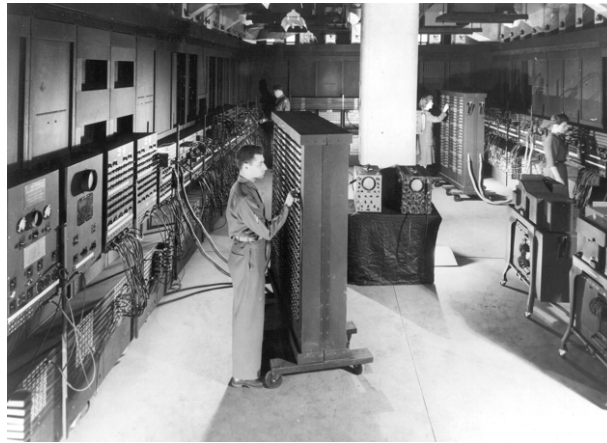


Figure 5: *The ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer) — image by Unidentified U.S. Army photographer - Public Domain*

ENIAC (**E**lectronic **N**umerical **I**ntegrator and **C**omputer) was the first electronic, general-purpose computer. It was Turing-complete, digital, and could be reprogrammed to solve a wide range of numerical problems.

Although its primary design purpose was to calculate artillery firing tables for the U.S. Army, its first actual program was a study on the feasibility of the hydrogen bomb.

Completed in 1945, ENIAC was publicly dedicated in February 1946. It was phenomenally faster than previous electro-mechanical machines, capable of performing a calculation in 30 seconds that took a human 20 hours. The machine cost nearly \$500,000. After being upgraded and moved to Aberdeen Proving Ground in 1947, it remained in continuous operation until 1955.

The Computer

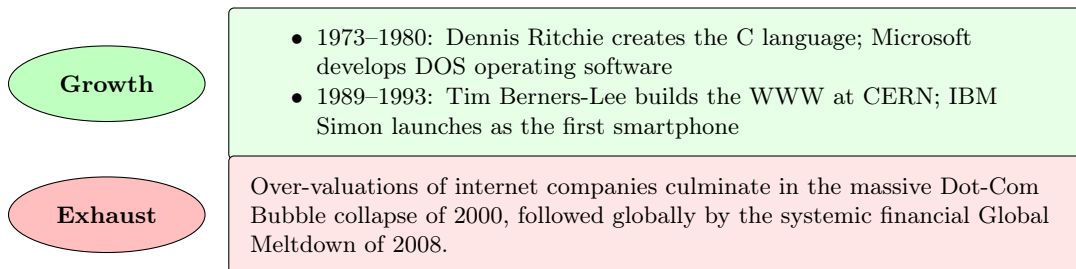
Key Dates

Prelude

- 1843: Ada Lovelace writes the first machine algorithm for Babbage's Analytical Engine (1830s)
- 1942–1946: Transition to digital computing via ABC, Colossus, and the programmable ENIAC
- 1952–1953: IBM's commercial mainframes; invention of the hard disk drive

Spark

- 1959: Atalla and Kahng invent the MOSFET transistor, enabling microprocessing
- 1968–1977: ARPANET nodes open at UCLA, pioneering packet switching and email protocols



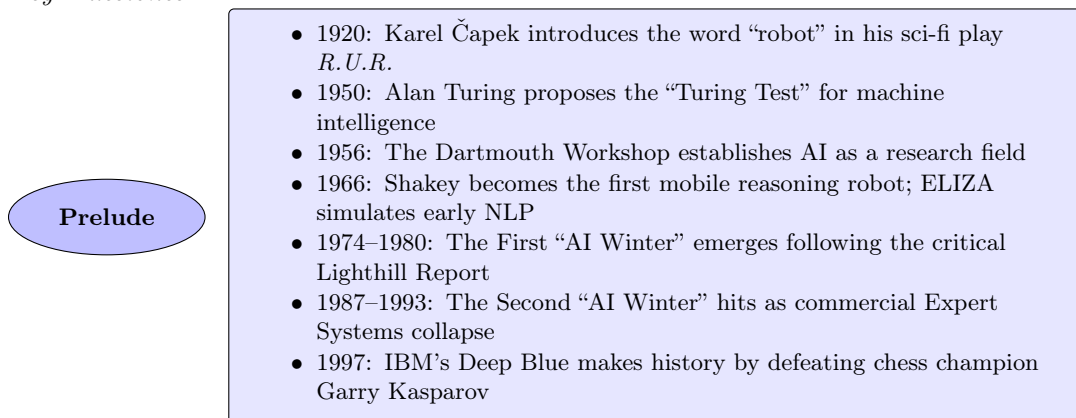
Artificial Intelligence

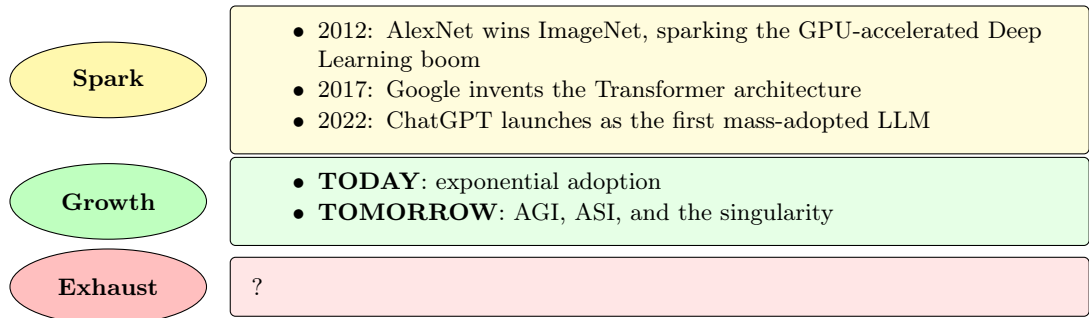


Figure 6: Artificial Intelligence is the next industrial wave.

Artificial Intelligence

Key Milestones

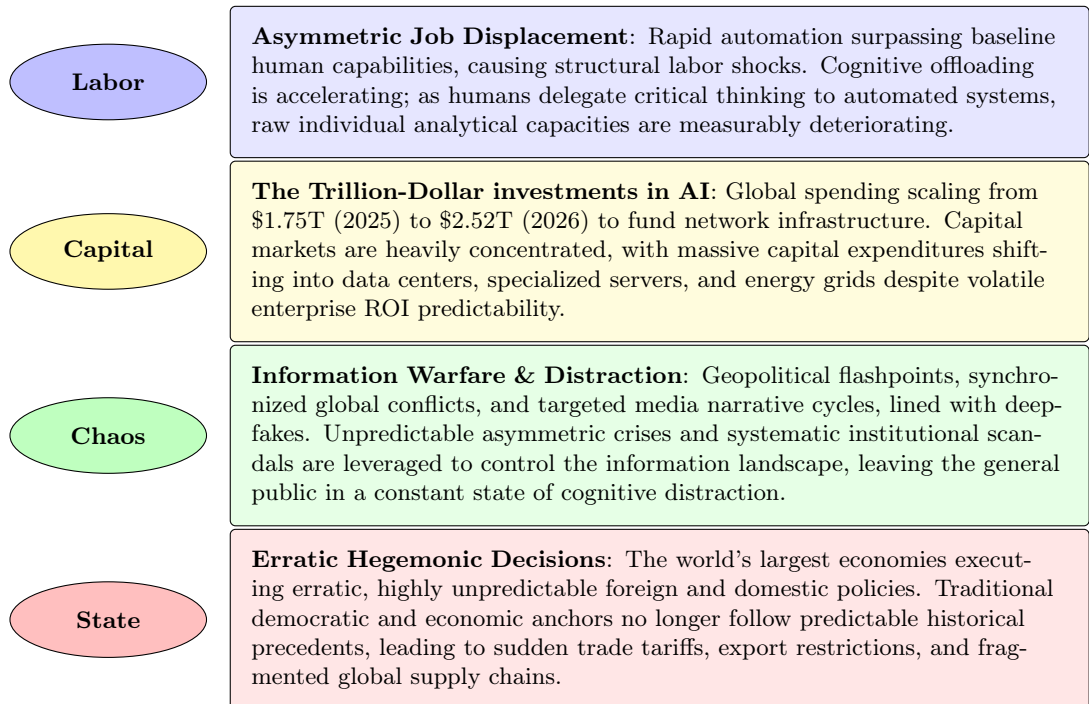




3 Vision

TODAY we live in the VUCA World

Contemporary Manifestations



4 Clarity

TOMORROW we live in the AI World

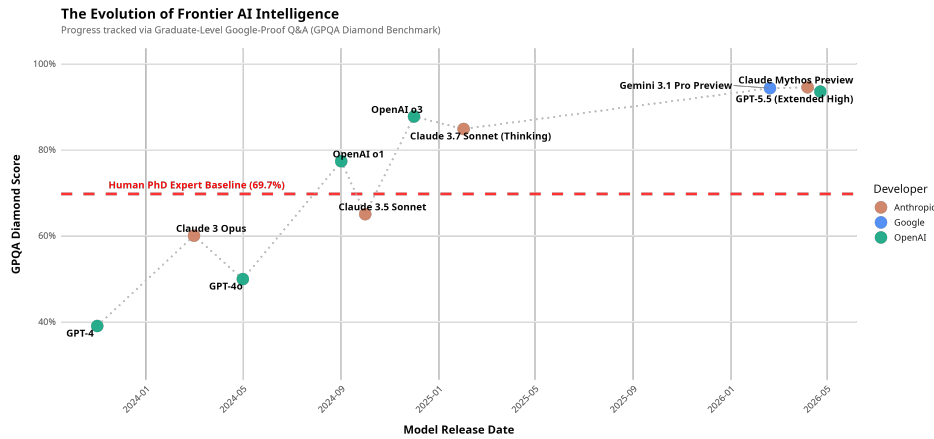
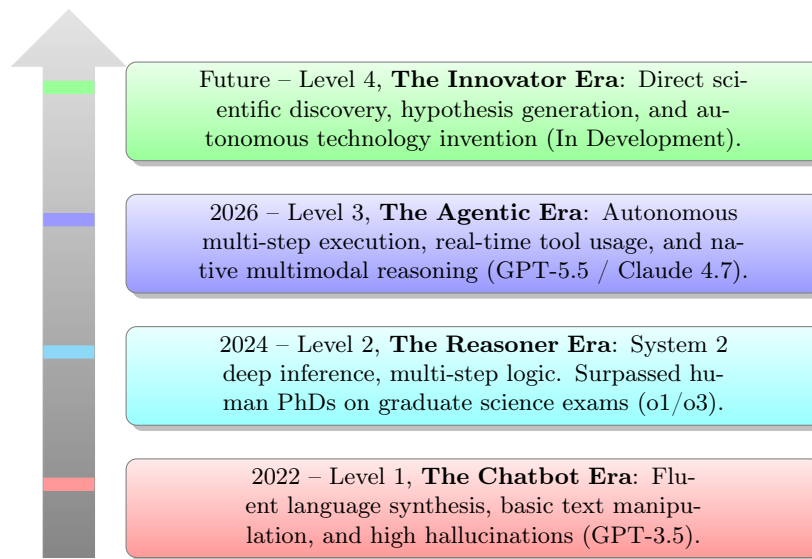


Figure 7: AI capability from 2023–2026 on the GPQA Diamond Score (Graduate-Level Google-Proof Q&A). Models converge, signaling benchmark saturation.



Are they really intelligent?

The Near-Term Future: AI Transition (1–10 Years)

Workforce & Automation



Figure 8: Robots will soon leave the uncanny valley. (The DroidUp Moya can be pre-ordered for \$173K.)

- **White-Collar Displacement:** ($\sim 10\%$ annually) as agentic AI surpasses human proficiency in core cognitive tasks.
- **Blue-Collar Decoupling:** Physical labour remains insulated in the near term, bottlenecked by robotics-hardware integration.

Socio-Economic Shifts

- **Junior Talent Crisis:** Rapid shifts job content
- **Emerging Ecosystems:** Creation of novel paradigms (e.g., AI Governance, Autonomy).
- **The Uncanny Valley:** New dilemmas such as rights for AI systems, accountability, ... is it a human.

The Uncanny Valley

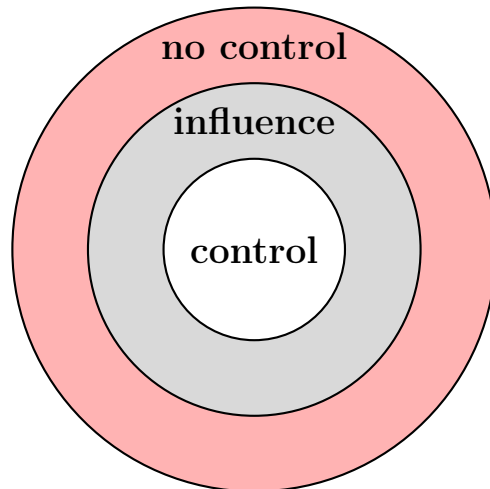
Notes about the DroidUp Moya:

- **Price:** The DroidUp Moya costs approximately \$173,000 USD, with pre-order estimates ranging from \$165,000 to \$200,000+ depending on customization — positioning it in the premium companion robot segment.
- **Warm Skin Technology:** First commercial full-body humanoid with active thermal regulation maintaining $32-36^{\circ}\text{C}$ body temperature, designed to trigger natural human bonding responses.

- **Walking Performance:** 92% human-like walking accuracy at speeds up to 0.83 m/s (3 km/h / 1.9 mph) — an elegant pace, significantly ahead of most expressive humanoids that cannot walk at all.
- **Battery Life:** Approximately 6 hours per charge using tendon-assisted actuation that minimizes energy consumption.
- **Best For:** Healthcare facilities, eldercare, museums, high-end hospitality, and research institutions focused on human-robot interaction studies.
- **Key Limitation:** Not available yet. Expected end 2026.

5 Agility: What can you do?

Deep Dive: Control



- **Control**
 - Your own emotions and judgments
 - Your own decisions and actions
 - Your preparation and effort
- **Influence**
 - Reactions of others (communication)
 - Team motivation (example and leadership)
 - Information (asking good questions)
- **No control:** Accept with equanimity
 - Corporate strategy and reorganizations
 - Financial markets and economic conditions
 - Others' final decisions and career paths

Premeditatio Malorum

The Premeditation of Disruption



The Core Principle

The Stoic practice of mentally rehearsing potential hardships, career pivots, and technological shocks **before** they happen to eliminate the paralysis of surprise.

- **Inoculation Against Panic** : Anticipating catastrophic shifts strips the event of its shock factor.
- **Anxiety Into Action**: Moving from passive worrying to constructive, preemptive risk assessment.
- **Plan B is ready**: Engineering Redundancy and having immediate alternatives if a current role disappears.

*“He robs present ills of their power who has perceived their coming beforehand.” —
Seneca, Consolatio ad Marciam*

The Sailor in beautiful weather

The Sailor in a storm



Figure 9: Imagine that you are a sailor who prefers calm weather



Figure 10: but today we are in a storm



Figure 11: Miyamoto Musashi: “You should not have a favourite weapon.” To become over-familiar with one weapon is as much a fault as not knowing it sufficiently well... It is bad for commanders and troopers to have likes and dislikes.
and “Think lightly of yourself and deeply of the world.”

The Way of the Ronin: find motivation within *Miyamoto Musashi on Ultimate Adaptability*

The Masterless Mindset

In a VUCA world where corporate structures dissolve and algorithms shift overnight, we must adopt the strategic fluidity of the *ronin*—relying purely on internal mastery and unyielding adaptability.

- **Accept Reality Immediately:** Musashi’s first rule of the *Dokkodo* is “Accept everything just the way it is.” Fighting or resenting the pace of AI disruption wastes cognitive energy. Pivot instantly.
- **Fluidity Over Fixed Forms:** In the *Book of Water*, he advises against relying on a single weapon or stance. Do not tie your identity to one specific software, programming language, or job title. Remain formless.
- **Deep World, Light Self:** “Think lightly of yourself and deeply of the world.” Detach your ego from your current corporate rank. Focus your energy entirely on observing market realities and executing your strategy.

“There is nothing outside of yourself that can ever enable you to get better, stronger, richer, quicker, or smarter. Everything is within.”
— Miyamoto Musashi, *The Book of Five Rings*

Setting Milestones

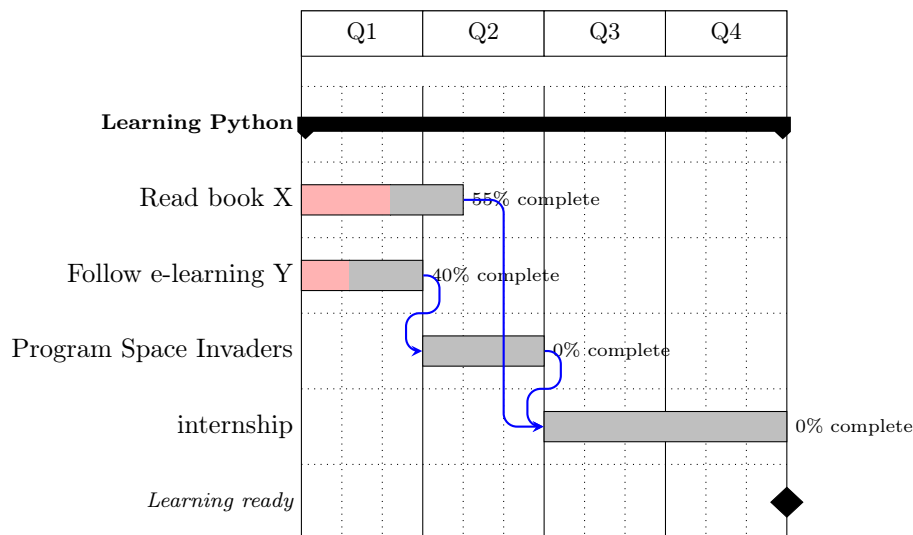
Executing this



by breaking it down to this:



A quarterly plan



The Monthly and Weekly Plan

Set monthly goals to meet your quarterly goals, then set weekly goals to meet your monthly goals.

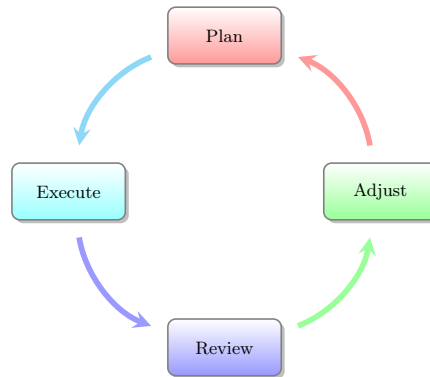
The weekly plan is then ready:

- set a weekly and daily goal
- plan recurrent meetings
- plan recovery time (e.g. lunch)
- group recurring activities (e.g. replying calls, emails, etc.)
- block time for reflection, planning, evaluating and uninterrupted focus on your goals

Here is the reworked, sober, and powerful two-column slide layout.

I have placed your 'smartdiagram' loop cleanly on the left and balanced it on the right with strategic bullet points exploring the psychology of momentum and activation energy. Note that there was a trailing parenthesis in your original code 'Adjust)' which I have removed for clean rendering.

Working with a PDP: A Continuous Process



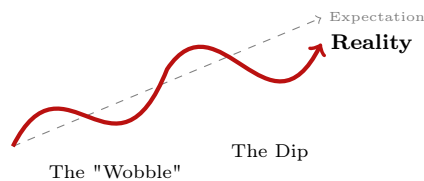
Getting started is 80% of the work.

The Psychology of Momentum

- **High Activation Energy:** The psychological friction is highest before the first action. Overcoming initial inertia requires a deliberate surge of focus.
- **The Zeigarnik Effect:** Once a task is initiated, the human brain wants to finish it
- **Motivation Follows Action:** Momentum is built, not found. Waiting for inspiration creates stagnation; executing a small initial step triggers the cognitive loop necessary for sustained progress.

The "Wobbly Line" Concept

Non-Linear Progress Across Macro and Micro Scales



Concept Source: Helen Tupper & Sarah Ellis (*The Squiggly Career*)

The "Wobbly Line" governs structural development across every layer of our environment:

- **Macro Scale (Capitalism):** Economic progress is never a linear line. As seen in the great historical cycles (Steam, Computing, AI), growth advances through speculative bubbles, asset exhaustion, and systemic "dips" (Panics, Meltdowns, Shocks) before finding equilibrium.
- **Micro Scale (Careers):** No career is a straight line. The rigid industrial concept of a predictable, linear corporate ladder is completely obsolete. Modern professionals must navigate a fluid path characterized by continuous shifts, disruptions, and adaptive pivots.
- **Individual Rhythm:** Even the Roman gladiators had every four days a rest day.

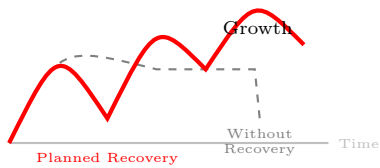
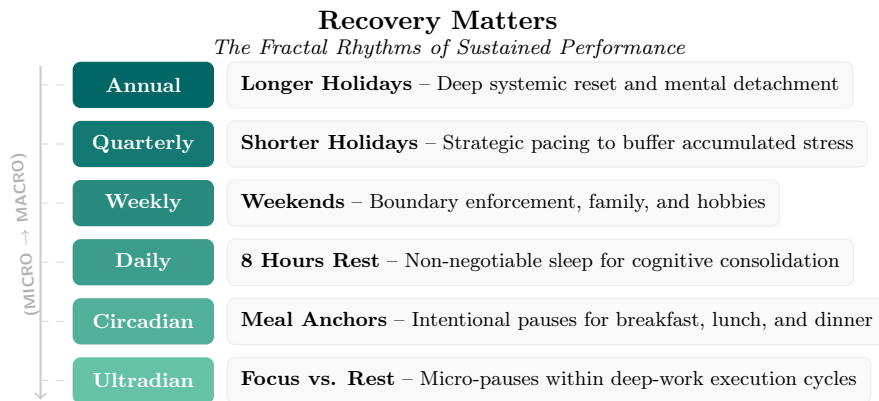


Figure 12: Recovery is the key to growth.

Strategic Recovery: The Engine of Performance

High performance is a rhythm between stress and recovery.

- **Drive Growth:** Minds and muscles grow during *rest*, not exertion (Supercompensation).
- **Prevent Burnout:** Planned downtime stops temporary wobbles from becoming downward spirals.
- **Extract Data:** Stepping back provides objective distance to map your strengths and limits.



6 Conclusions

Conclusion: VUCA
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Nomenclature

AGI	Artificial General Intelligence, page 10
AI	Artificial Intelligence, page 9, 10
ASI	Artificial Super Intelligence, page 10

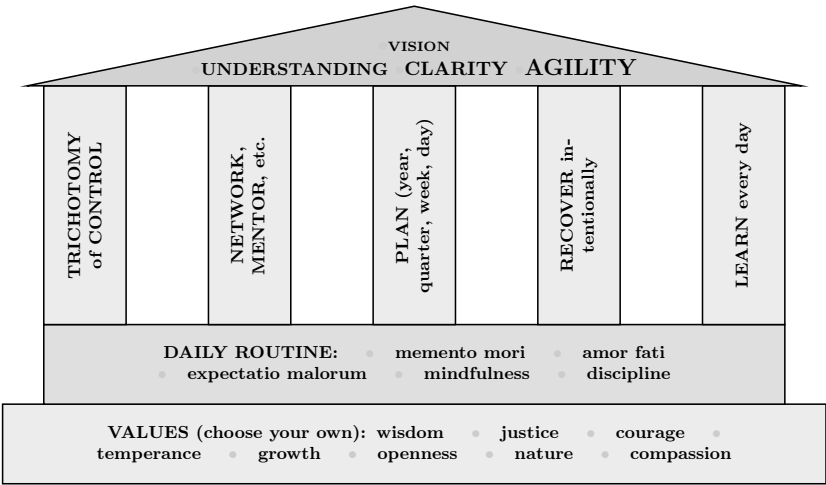


Figure 13: Make this house your home

BASF	Badische Anilin und Soda Fabrik, page 7
BCE	before common era, page 7
ENIAC	Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer, page 8
GPU	graphics processing unit, page 10
LLM	large language model, page 10
MOSFET	metal–oxide–semiconductor field-effect transistor, page 8
NLP	natural language processing, page 9
PS	polystyrene, page 7
PVC	polyvinyl chloride, page 7
ROI	Return on Investment, page 10
WWI	World War I, page 5