

Gemma Munro: Keynote outlined a "**Peaceful Peak Performance**" toolkit to get out of hustle and burnout: move from Beta to Alpha (shift from a manic left-brain to a calm whole brain), demote your lizard brain to an annoying committee member, use your body's yes/no signals to make decisions, step off the dance floor for balcony time, and shift perspective from magpie to eagle/mouse. It also identified three reasons we stay stuck — an old way of working that no longer works, the untested assumption that it's the only way, and all-or-nothing thinking that overstates the consequences of change.

Shift 1: Move from Beta to Alpha (manic left brain → calm whole brain)

What it is: Shift out of fast, anxious, problem-solving Beta mode into a slower, receptive Alpha state so you can think creatively and make calmer decisions.

Tools

- Alpha time (scheduled short daily sessions): block 10–20 minutes each day for low-stimulus, reflective activity (walking, soft music, gentle breathing) to down-regulate arousal and let insights surface.
- Breathwork / grounding routines: 4–6 slow, deep diaphragmatic breaths or box breathing for 2–5 minutes when tension spikes to reduce cortisol and interrupt frantic thinking.
- Micro pauses: embed 20–60 second pauses between meetings or tasks to close the cognitive loop, reset attention and prevent overload.
- Sleep & morning routines: protect sleep and use a calm morning ritual (no frantic email) to start the day in a lower arousal state.

Shift 2: Demote the lizard brain (decide with fearful mind → decide with heart & gut)

What it is: Stop letting automatic threat responses (anxiety, catastrophic scenarios or inner critic) run big decisions; bring embodied signals and values into the process.

Tools

- Body yes/no check: when facing a choice, pause and notice bodily reactions (openness, sinking, tightness). Use these as quick data points rather than sole dictators.
- Short somatic scans: 60–90 seconds scanning body sensations to notice anxiety vs. groundedness before committing.
- "Annoying committee member" technique: label the fear voice (e.g. "Lizard") and ask it to sit with other inputs, acknowledge but don't automatically obey.
- Values + gut alignment: map options against core values and bodily response; choose options that align with both.

Shift 3: From Go-Go-Go to Pause–Go–Pause

What it is: Replace constant doing with rhythms of action and recovery so work quality improves and burnout risk drops.

Tools

- Balcony time (step off the dance floor): regularly step back to reflect on strategy and priorities — e.g. weekly 30–60 minute review away from execution to reassess what matters.
- The "fuck-it" bucket / triage: create a list or folder of tasks to defer or dump. At decision points, be prepared to remove low-value items quickly.

- Time boxing & deliberate breaks: work in focused sprints (e.g. 45–90 minutes) followed by intentional breaks to consolidate and recharge.
- Role switching (magpie → eagle/mouse): adopt different perspectives — eagle (overview, decisions) for strategy, mouse (detail, execution) for focused work — and assign time for each so you don't bounce chaotically between modes.

Quick implementation tips

- Start small: pick one tool from one shift and practise it consistently for two weeks (e.g. daily 10-minute Alpha time).
- Make tools visible: set calendar blocks, label a “fuck-it” bucket, put a reminder for balcony time.
- Review impact weekly: note what changes in mood, clarity and decisions and adjust.