Twitter Thread by Lenny Rachitsky



Lenny Rachitsky
@lennysan

Earlier today, I gave a talk at the @SubstackInc's writer conference about building a writing habit. Below are the ten concrete strategies I shared that have helped me publish a post every week for 1.5 years ■

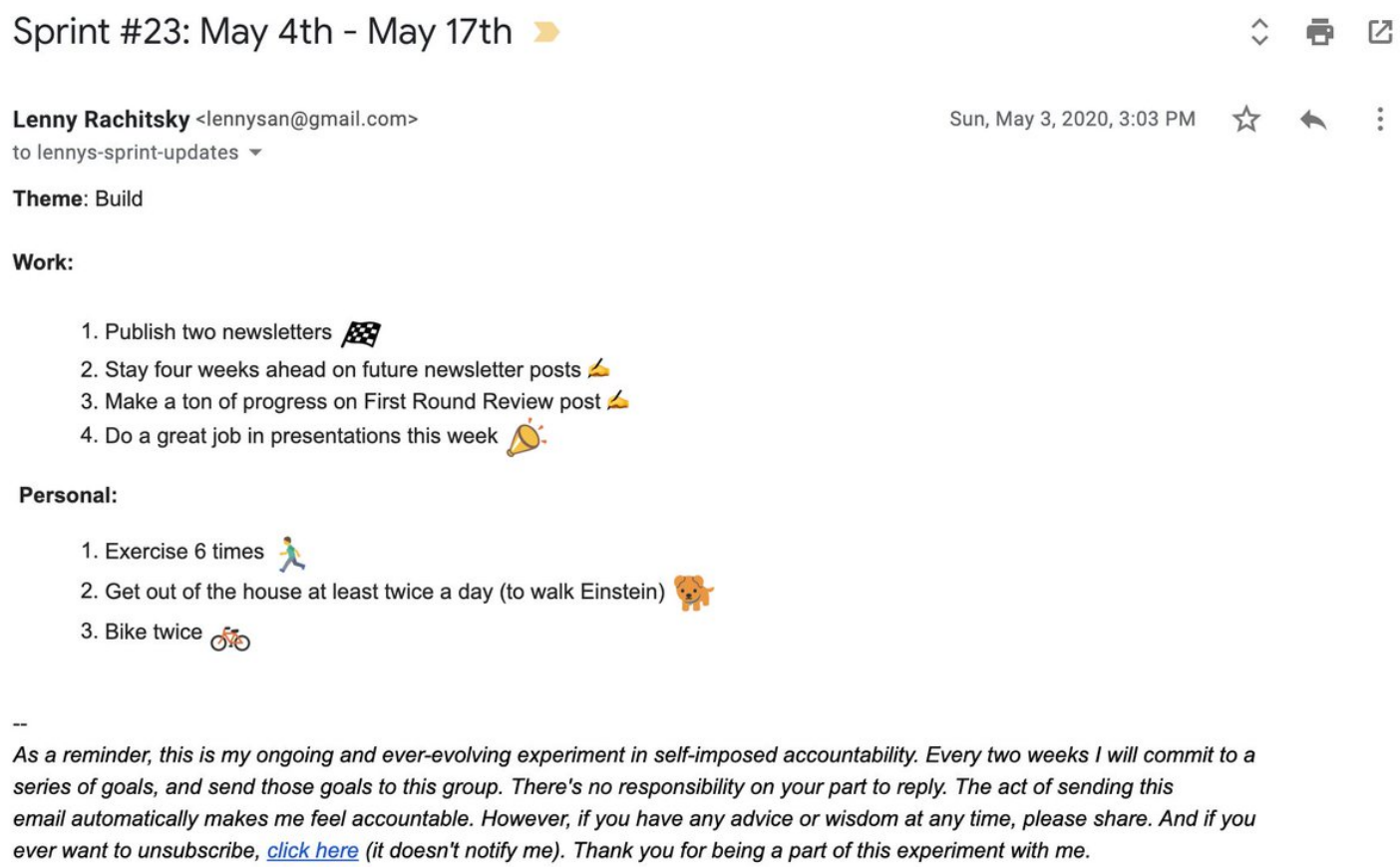
0/ First of all, just sharing advice about this topic gives me serious impostor syndrome because writing is still pretty new to me, and I have much to learn. But these are things that have helped me, and I hope they'll help you.

1/ Strategy 1: Commit publicly

This was maybe 50% of my initial motivation. Having told people I was going to write weekly made me feel bad when even thinking about skipping a week. It gave me just enough nudge to keep going.
https://t.co/R0EWblrHnW

> I'm kicking off an experiment. Inspired by the great @joulee, and building off of the great inbound questions I continue to get from ya'll -- I\u2019m going to start using my newsletter to answer your questions. \U0001f44b
>
> Sign up belowhttps://t.co/z1F1efMcue
>
> — Lenny Rachitsky (@lennysan) September 12, 2019

1b/ You don't need to make this super public. Just sending an email to a few friends regularly with your concrete goals about writing (and anything else) works wonders.



Sprint #23: May 4th - May 17th

Lenny Rachitsky <lennysan@gmail.com>
to lennys-sprint-updates

Sun, May 3, 2020, 3:03 PM

Theme: Build

Work:

1. Publish two newsletters 🏁
2. Stay four weeks ahead on future newsletter posts ✍️
3. Make a ton of progress on First Round Review post ✍️
4. Do a great job in presentations this week 📣

Personal:

1. Exercise 6 times 🏃‍♂️
2. Get out of the house at least twice a day (to walk Einstein) 🐕
3. Bike twice 🚲

--

As a reminder, this is my ongoing and ever-evolving experiment in self-imposed accountability. Every two weeks I will commit to a series of goals, and send those goals to this group. There's no responsibility on your part to reply. The act of sending this email automatically makes me feel accountable. However, if you have any advice or wisdom at any time, please share. And if you ever want to unsubscribe, click here (it doesn't notify me). Thank you for being a part of this experiment with me.

1c/ If you *really* want to be motivated, ask people for money. Nothing motivates you more than people paying you for regular content.
https://t.co/ZH6Dm87jFr

> Life alert: I\u2019m adding a paid plan to my newsletter \U0001f91e
>
> After much prodding from readers and friends, I\u2019m going to take the leap and give this life-path a shot.
>
> Consider subscribing and joining me on this journey \U0001f64fhttps://t.co/gtFm4POGSQ
>
> — Lenny Rachitsky (@lennysan) April 7, 2020

2/ Strategy #2: Stay close to what interests you

Writing is hard enough. Write about things that you're genuinely energized by, excited to learn more about, or curious about. Don't force yourself to write things you think you *should* or *need* to write about.

It won't last.

2b/ On that, the classic advice is to find a tiny niche and become the best person in that niche. I ignored this advice. I didn't want to spend all of my time thinking about *just* PM, or just growth, etc. I stayed broad so that I'd stay interested in the topic(s).

3/ Strategy #3: Maintain a sustainable pace

Here's what your pace should feel like, IMHO. Writing a newsletter is a marathon. Don't burn yourself out. I personally love the weekly cadence. Daily newsletters blow my mind.



3b/ Important: People don't want MORE emails. They want better, more valuable, emails.

Consistency + quality = you win.

4/ Strategy #4: Protect deep work time

Valuable, interesting, creative work always comes from focused, distraction-free time. But the world is always trying to take this time away from you. You need to find strategies to protect this time. Read this book.
https://t.co/cWaAYRzZMd

4b/ If you don't have a full-time job, my advice is to avoid booking any meetings until 3pm. Try it. It's game-changing.

If you do have a job, can you add 3-hour blocks of time the mornings of M/W/F? Or on a weekend?

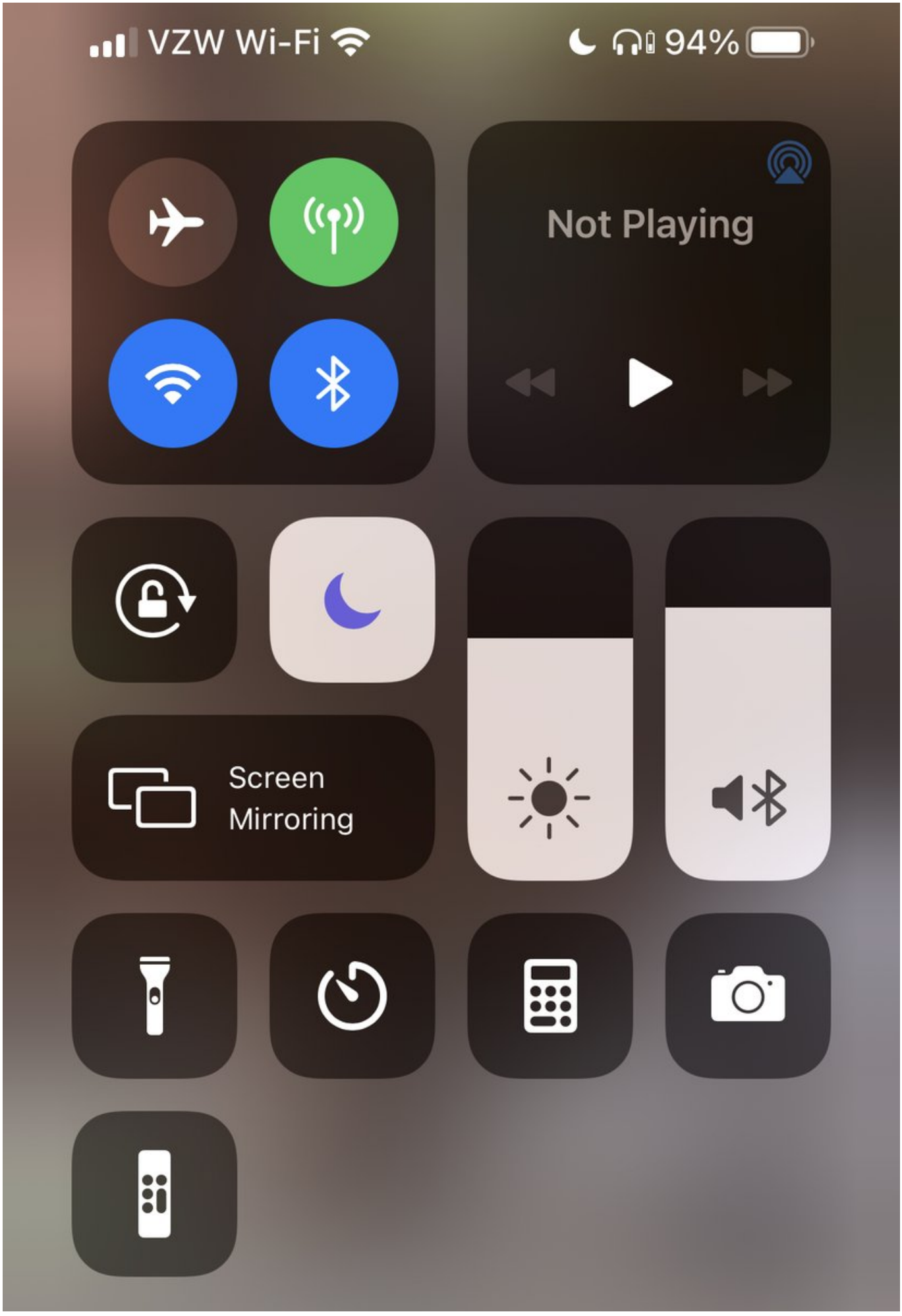


4c/ The #1 highest-grossing Substack writer does it part-time, every day, and makes over $1m. It's possible. https://t.co/oZ9qOgC7nW

5/ Strategy #5: Turn on do-not-disturb mode on both your phone and computer

We have puny brains with no ability to avoid distractions. Embrace "ignorance is bliss." Shut off notifications by turning on DND.

At a minimum, do this during your deep work time. Ideally, all day.


VZW Wi-Fi
94%
Not Playing
Screen
Mirroring

6/ Strategy #6: Find tools that help you stay focused, organized, and distraction free

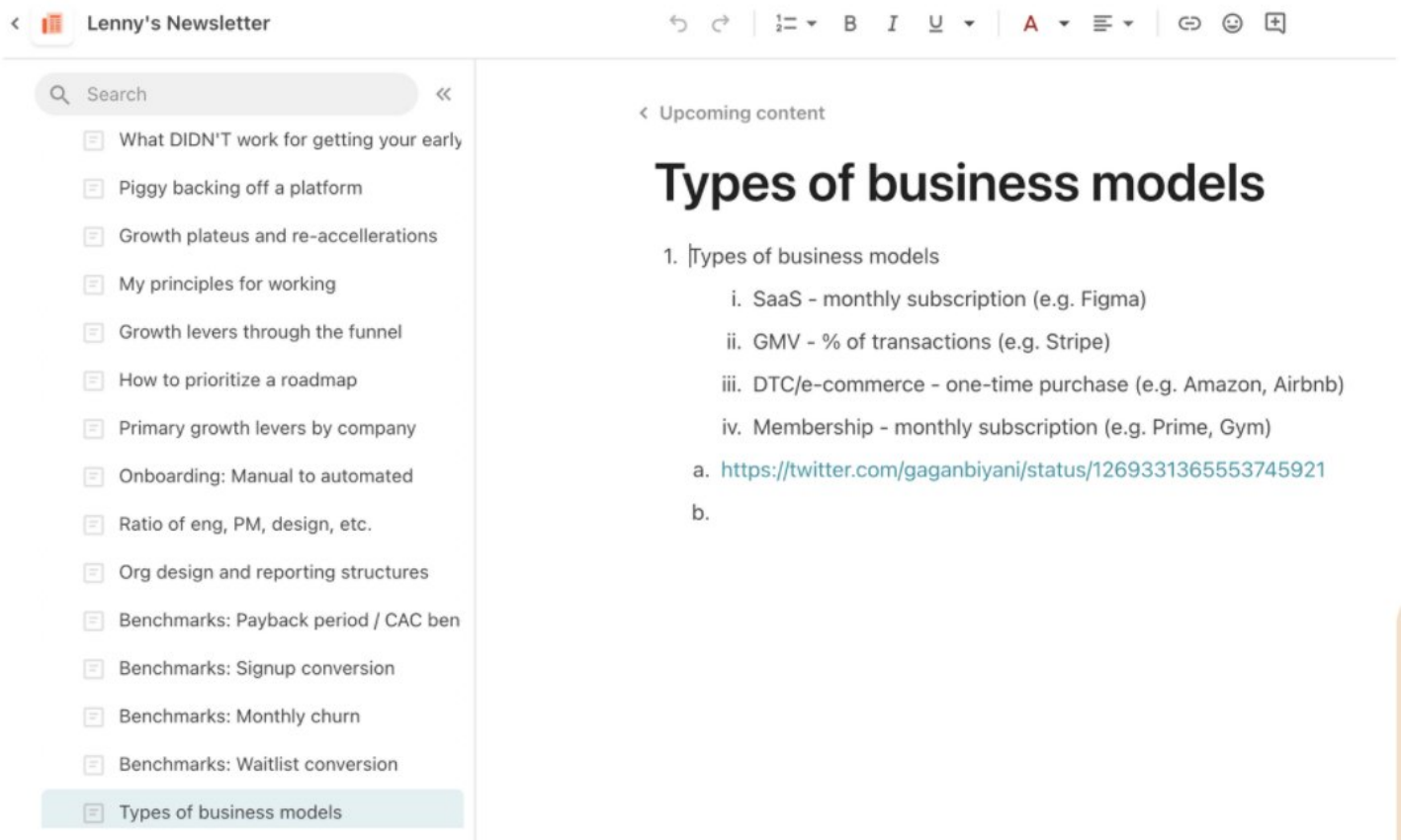
1. A TODO app to prioritize your tasks (I use @centered_app)
2. A doc tool to organize your content (I use @coda_hq)
3. A note-taking tool for quick notes (I use https://t.co/YHvgJvV9dt)

6b/

4. Tools to help you with writing (I use @Grammarly and https://t.co/tTNv9lH9Ik)
5. Nutrients to boost energy and focus (I drink tea and @magicmind)
6. A platform for hosting/sending content (I use @SubstackInc)

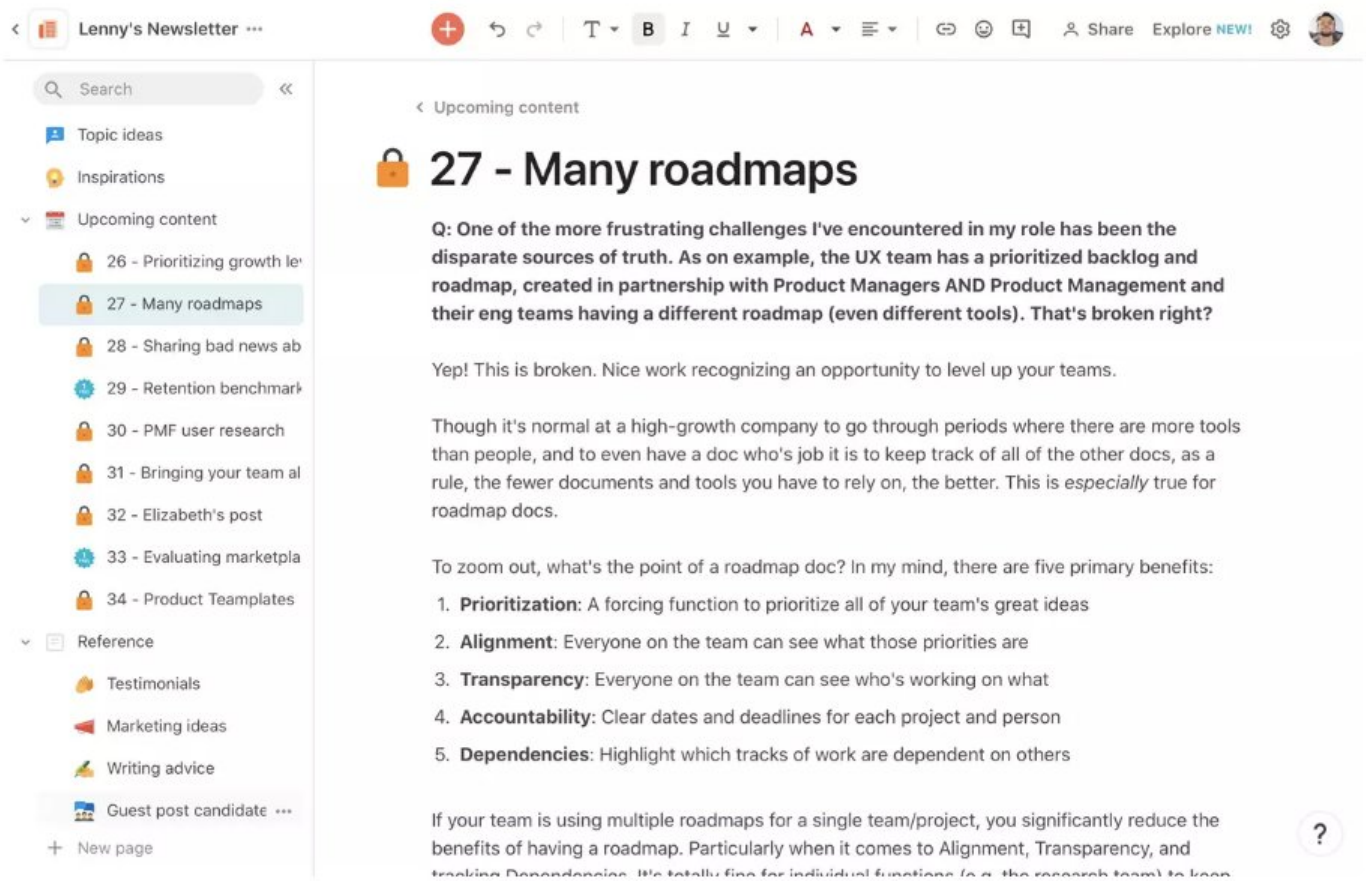
7/ Strategy #7: Have an idea dumping ground

When you have time to write, you want to avoid the blank page as much as possible. What helps me is having a place to dump random idea as they come, which I can build and add to over time. I use Coda pages for this.



8/ Strategy #8: Turn this idea backlog into a prioritized list of your upcoming content

Give your brain a chance to marinate on what's coming up next, and let go of the things that are way out in the future. And once it's fleshed out enough, throw it into your email system.



9/ Strategy #9: Go where the energy takes you

Give yourself permission to change course on your next topic if you aren't feeling it. Go where your energy takes you.

You don't owe anyone anything (usually). More excited about something else? Roll with it! It'll be better also.

