# The Pre-Mortem Card

*Imagine your plan has already failed. Then make sure it does not.*



**NEW TO THIS? START HERE**

Before a big decision, most of us only picture success. A pre-mortem flips that. You pretend it is a year from now and the plan went badly, then you write down why. It feels strange, and that is the point: it lets you see problems while they are still cheap to fix. You do not need a business. It works for a new job, a move, a big purchase or a family plan. Take twenty minutes and an honest pencil.

## HOW TO RUN IT (20 MINUTES)

1. Write your plan in one sentence.
2. Read the failure line out loud as if it already happened.
3. Alone and quietly, list at least five reasons it failed. No arguing yet.
4. Read the reasons aloud. Group them into a few themes.
5. For each big theme, choose one change you will make now.

## FOUR QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU COMMIT

- ☐ What problem are we really solving?
- ☐ What will it cost, in money and in time?
- ☐ When will the cash actually arrive?
- ☐ What result would make us stop?

**Our plan, in one sentence:** _____

*"It is _____. The plan has failed and cost us. We are shutting it down. What happened?"*

## WHY IT FAILED (WRITE AT LEAST FIVE)

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

## THEMES AND THE ONE CHANGE WE WILL MAKE NOW

| Theme (what kept coming up) | Our change | Who / by when |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

**Decision:** ☐ Go ahead as planned ☐ Go ahead with the changes ☐ Wait and test smaller first

*Most plans survive their pre-mortem, stronger than before. The point is not to kill ideas. It is to stop paying full price for lessons.*