

TAME YOUR TROUBLES

Take 30-minutes to reduce the wily troubles that keep you feeling anxious



A Guide from Karl Bimshas Consulting

You Don't Have 99 Problems

Becoming overwhelmed is easy. Busy professionals have to deal with team performance, boss, direction, demanding clients, business partners, vendors, and more. They also have car problems, leaky faucets, untended gardens, messy garages, bills to pay, children teething or in puberty, or starting college. The list goes on.

Listen to people in elevators or waiting in line for a cup of coffee, and the litany of problems everyone is facing seems endless. I am no different, but I decided to challenge the assumption one day and do something besides lament and overindulge in chocolate. In my mind, I figured I had 99 problems. In reality, it was 50. After doing the steps to this exercise, I cut it down to five. That's a manageable number I can proactively act on. So can you, and to can do so in about 30 minutes.



I am Karl Bimshas, the Boston-bred and California chilled leadership advisor, writer, podcast host, and owner of Karl Bimshas Consulting, the results-driven leadership development and accountability consulting firm specializing in helping busy professionals increase their levels of confidence and support and decrease their levels of indecision or doubt by focusing on their purpose, values, and strengths to maximize their leadership potential.

Working in leadership development, independent business planning, personal coaching, and career management, I use astute insights to help new leaders and leaders in transition to improve their self-management and team-leadership capabilities.

In short, I help you create environments where great leaders outnumber lousy leaders, and better leadership is the norm, not the exception.

If you cannot do anything about it, stop thinking about it.

Many high-performers feel anxious over the volume of problems they face (or avoid) every day at work and home. I count myself among them, and no amount of vocabulary jujitsu seems to help. They can still feel like unsurmountable problems, whether you call them opportunities or challenges.

What if you worried less about what you called them and used your time to organize and begin solving them? In this guide, I'll walk you through a technique designed to tame your problems so you take some pressure off your mind and work on the significant few that will make the greatest impact.

Step One - List Your 99 Problems

Get a cup of coffee and give yourself ten minutes to write down all your troubles. There are two limits to this exercise:

- 1. You cannot list more than 99 problems.
- 2. You cannot exceed the allotted ten minutes.

Go!

1. _____	21. _____	41. _____
2. _____	22. _____	42. _____
3. _____	23. _____	43. _____
4. _____	24. _____	44. _____
5. _____	25. _____	45. _____
6. _____	26. _____	46. _____
7. _____	27. _____	47. _____
8. _____	28. _____	48. _____
9. _____	29. _____	49. _____
10. _____	30. _____	50. _____
11. _____	31. _____	51. _____
12. _____	32. _____	52. _____
13. _____	33. _____	53. _____
14. _____	34. _____	54. _____
15. _____	35. _____	55. _____
16. _____	36. _____	56. _____
17. _____	37. _____	57. _____
18. _____	38. _____	58. _____
19. _____	39. _____	59. _____
20. _____	40. _____	60. _____

61. _____
62. _____
63. _____
64. _____
65. _____
66. _____
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93. _____
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95. _____
96. _____
97. _____
98. _____
99. _____

Taming Your Troubles

1. Spend ten minutes brainstorming no more than 99 problems you're facing.
2. Consolidate your list.
3. What can you influence?
4. Prioritize.
5. Determine the significant few.
6. Take action.

Step Two - Consolidate

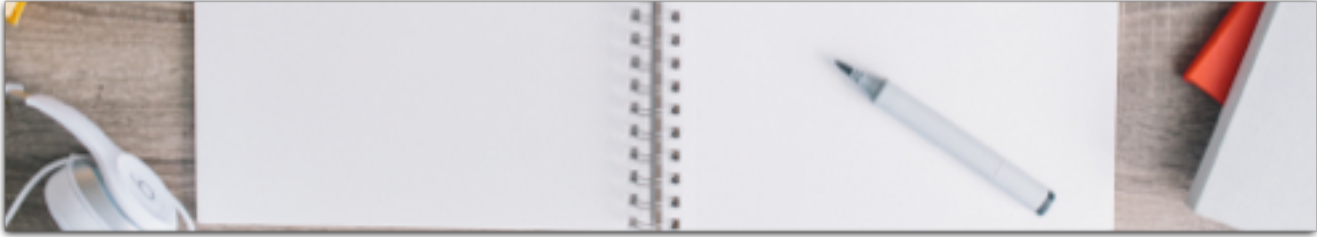
Look over your list and consolidate where you can. You may have written something twice or called it something similar. Towards the end of the list, your mind may have started encouraging you to write goals instead of obstacles. For example, one of your final entries could have been the word travel. Travel is not a problem. Maybe you would like to do more (or less) than you are currently doing. Those reasons could be a problem, but guess what? Too late. You are past your ten-minute mark, so travel gets crossed off. If you cannot articulate your troubles clearly, it's not a pressing problem. Condense your list as much as you can.



If you cannot articulate your troubles clearly, it's not a pressing problem.

Step Three - What CAN You Do?

Next, place a Y beside each item you **could** do something about. There's no guarantee you will, but be honest, if there is **anything** you can do to improve your condition, mark it. If there is not, if the issue is out of your control, cross it off. If you cannot do anything about it, stop thinking about it.



Step Four - Prioritize

Prioritize the remaining problems. Using a variation of Maslow's needs, rank each problem in the following manner:

- Place a 1 next to any **Biological and Physiological** needs (*The basic needs; air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep, etc.*).
- Place a 2 next to any **Safety** needs (*Shelter, security, order, law, stability, healthcare, etc.*).
- Place a 3 next to any **Love and Belongingness** needs (*family, affection, relationships workgroups, friendships, intimacy, acceptance*).
- Place a 4 next to any **Esteem** needs (*status, prestige, social recognition, and accomplishment, etc.*).
- Place a 5 next to any **Cognitive** needs (*knowledge, meaning, self-awareness, etc.*).
- Place a 6 next to any **Aesthetic** needs (*appreciation, search for beauty, balance, form, etc.*).
- Place a 7 next to any **Self-Actualization** needs (*striving for full personal potential, self-fulfillment, seeking personal growth.*).
- Place an 8 next to any **Transcendence** needs (*helping others achieve self-actualization.*).

Step Five - Apply 80/20

The Pareto Principle tells us that roughly 80% of the effects come from 20% of the causes. If you're feeling overwhelmed by a series of problems, it will probably be impossible to solve them all quickly. Better to focus on the vital few. In step five, you organize your current troubles by motivating needs. While it is possible, your "biggest" trouble might not correspond with pressing motivations; it's a place to start.

Reduce your list by 20%. If you had 99 problems, you'd focus on no more than 20.

Create this reduced list of problems by ranking them by motivating need. Start with the items labeled with a 1, then a 2, etc. Theoretically, 80% of the problems that occupy your time will be on this smaller list. That is still too many, so cut it in half. This will leave you with a reasonable number of problems (between 1 and 10).

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____
- 9. _____
- 10. _____
- 11. _____
- 12. _____
- 13. _____
- 14. _____
- 15. _____
- 16. _____
- 17. _____
- 18. _____
- 19. _____
- 20. _____

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____
- 9. _____
- 10. _____

The Pareto Principle

*Roughly 80% of the effects
come from 20% of the
causes.*

Step Six - Next Action

Finally, turn each of these into an action item. For example, “Car needs new struts” becomes “Get a quote for new struts.” Schedule each activity on your calendar, or if possible, act on them now and resolve them.

Congratulations! You may not have eliminated all your troubles, but you just tamed them.

	Next Action	How Much?	By When?	Status
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

*As soon as you confront it, the
dynamic of a problem shifts.*

About Karl Bimshas Consulting

Karl Bimshas Consulting turns underestimated, professionals who have started feeling discouraged into confident, competent leaders in their field without becoming jerks.

We help create environments where great leaders outnumber lousy leaders, and better leadership is the norm, not the exception.

- Maximize your existing strengths with customized leadership agendas.
- Improve your decision-making in ways that support your values, purpose, and vision.
- Increase your versatility with straightforward leadership models, styles, behaviors, and tools.
- Challenge, disrupt, and reduce the negative influence of lousy leaders.



Go to KarlBimshasConsulting.com for more tools and guides for leadership development and accountability, or sign-up for a leadership consultation. It's easy and free!

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