

# Squirrel In Hell

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## Actionable Eisenhower

*Note: This is a small peek into the kind of background model-building that goes into Be Well Tuned. I don't currently have resources to invest into writing, so the description is pretty bare-bones. On the positive side, I have changed the blog theme to black text on light background - I hope that makes it more readable.*

The Eisenhower matrix is a (somewhat) useful high-level framing of a certain aspect of productivity, based on classifying tasks/activities into four types. It's casual application was entertainingly explored in this [Wait But Why](#) post. I'll minimally quote just the matrix itself:

<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>
urgent and important	important but not urgent
(do it now)	(decide when to do it)
<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>
urgent but not important	not urgent and not important
(delegate it away)	(delete it)

Now while I don't deny that this classification is (somewhat) useful, it's definitely not very actionable. The typical obvious conclusion from reflecting on it, "I should do more Q2 activities", predictably does not get implemented. Well, that's because implementing a systematic way to do Q2 activities *is itself a Q2 activity*.

However, there's a version of the matrix which is much closer to being actionable (close enough that I dared to write [specific instructions](#)). Basically, I'm taking the distinctions between types of activities in the world, and turning them into distinctions between states of mind:

<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>
alert and anxious	alert and calm
("stressed")	("meditative")
<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>
unfocused and anxious	unfocused and calm
("useless")	("relaxed")

The unfocused/alert axis corresponds roughly to [PSNS/SNS](#) activation. The anxious/calm axis corresponds to how much the brain is under

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psychological/emotional pressure to solve some specific problem or task.

The "common sense" understanding of relaxation runs across the diagram, visiting mostly Q1 ("stressed") and Q4 ("relaxed") as a result of reacting to the environment. Although people sometimes end up in Q3 ("useless") by accident, as in e.g. spending a sleepless night worrying, it is much less likely that they will accidentally do something Q2.

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