



The 4 Pillars of Professional Poker

Built through Presence, Structure, and Vision

A working map of everything that goes into a complete game — and a short self-evaluation to find the one change that will move your results the most, right now.

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Most players pour almost everything into one thing: strategy. And strategy matters enormously — it runs through every pillar here. But on its own, it's rarely what separates players who keep climbing from players who stall. That comes from how strategy works together with everything around it: how you prepare, how you perform, how you sustain yourself, and how well you understand yourself.

This framework came out of a simple question asked in our first group session: *what are the real pillars of success in poker?* Here is what we mapped — and how to use it on yourself.

The Four Pillars

Four domains make up a complete game. Three core skills run *through* all of them — the lenses you bring to each pillar:

Presence — see clearly

Structure — act consistently

Vision — orient wisely

1 PREPARATION

How you get ready

Everything you do before the cards are dealt: what you study, how you warm up, how you prioritize. Good preparation is **tailored to you** — your game, your stakes, and where you are right now. It means studying what matters in your environment and deliberately leaving behind what doesn't. It also means preparing for reality, not just for winning: agreeing, in advance, to enter a game full of variance you can't control.

2 EXECUTION

How you perform

What you actually do at the table. The best players cut through the noise: they find the single most important variable in a spot and act on it. They stay flexible rather than rigid, reading the same opponent differently across two different situations. Execution is where preparation gets tested — and where a clear, structured way of reviewing your play turns each session into information you can use.

3 LIFESTYLE

How you sustain yourself

Sleep, food, movement, relationships, and simply enjoying your life. It looks like the domain furthest from poker, but it quietly supports every other pillar. And it's rarely improved by brute force — often a lifestyle leak exists *for a reason* (grinding too many hours because the win rate feels too low). Sometimes the fastest way to fix your lifestyle is to fix something else first.

4 SELF-KNOWLEDGE

How you understand yourself

Knowing who is actually making the decisions. Do you lean toward bluffing or not, calling or folding — and how does being wrong on each affect you for the rest of the night? Two close decisions can break differently once you factor in how each outcome lands on *you*. The deepest version of this skill: telling the difference between a story you're telling yourself and what is actually true.

THE MOST IMPORTANT MOVE

Start where the leverage is — not where the pain is.

Every pillar feeds the others: better lifestyle makes self-knowledge easier; better self-knowledge makes preparation sharper. So the instinct to attack your *weakest* area is usually a trap — it's often the heaviest lift. Instead, find your **lowest-hanging fruit**: the change that returns the most improvement for the least effort. That's where to begin.

"Be kind to yourself. When you can be present and kind to your experience, that's how you build sustainable focus and energy."

— Jared Alderman

Your Self-Evaluation

For each pillar, rate the three skills from 1 (needs real work) to 5 (a genuine strength), then add them up for a **domain score out of 15**. Don't overthink the numbers — your first instinct is usually the most useful. When all four are scored, read the note at the end.

PREPARATION How you get ready

Presence — Notice how a study session leaves you: clearer, or more lost?

1 2 3 4 5

Structure — A repeatable prep routine tuned to your game and schedule.

1 2 3 4 5

Vision — Know what you're preparing toward before you open the solver.

1 2 3 4 5

PREPARATION SCORE _____ / 15

EXECUTION How you perform

Presence — Stay with the hand in front of you, not the last one.

1 2 3 4 5

Structure — A consistent way to turn each session into usable feedback.

1 2 3 4 5

Vision — Aim to spot the single most important variable and act on it.

1 2 3 4 5

EXECUTION SCORE — / 15

LIFESTYLE How you sustain yourself

Presence — Honestly feel what fuels you and what drains you.

1 2 3 4 5

Structure — Simple, sustainable habits: sleep, movement, time off.

1 2 3 4 5

Vision — A life that supports the game, not one that just survives it.

1 2 3 4 5

LIFESTYLE SCORE — / 15

SELF-KNOWLEDGE How you understand yourself

Presence — Watch your tendencies and reactions without judging them.

1 2 3 4 5

Structure — A steady reflection practice, and a group that reflects it back.

1 2 3 4 5

Vision — Learn to tell a story from the truth.

1 2 3 4 5

SELF-KNOWLEDGE SCORE — / 15

Now the part that matters. Compare your four domain scores — but don't just attack the lowest one. Look for your **lowest-hanging fruit**: the pillar (and the skill within it) where a small change would return the most for the least effort. It's rarely your weakest domain. That's your focus for the next month.

Want help finding — and fixing — yours?

This is exactly what we work through in the Poker Performance Group, week after week — on your actual hands and sessions, with a serious peer group and a coach who sees the whole picture.

[Book a free 30-minute call](#)

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