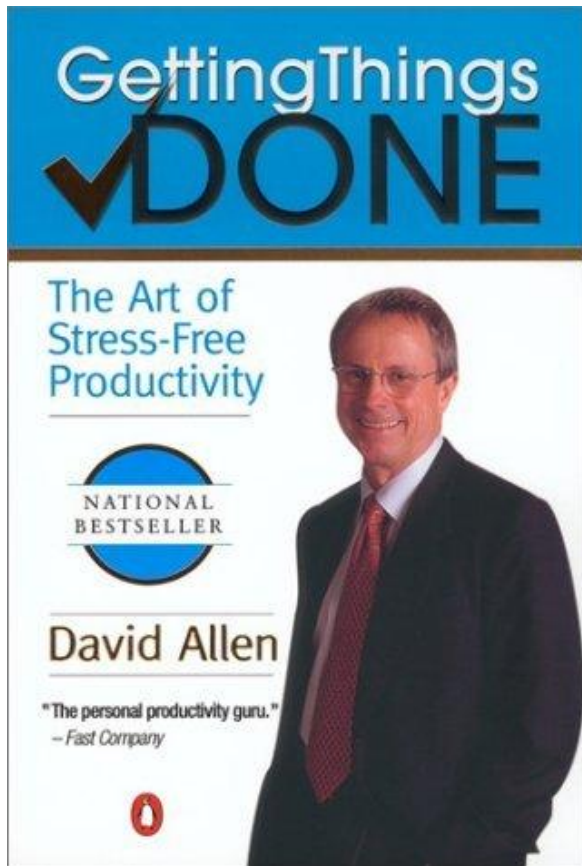


David Allen's "Getting Things Done"

Craig Yellowlees



"Getting Things Done"

By David Allen

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Overview

- What is GTD?
- GTD Workflow explained
- Key Components of the Workflow
- Useful tools

What is GTD?

What is GTD? 1

- Methodology for managing time and information
- Approach for coping with “information overload”
- Premise: having "too many things on your mind" interferes with optimal productivity

What is GTD? 2

- Proposed solution: Systematically record and process mental clutter in a system outside your head
- Leave reminders for yourself in a place you can rely on yourself to consistently check

What is GTD? 3



- “Bootstrap” pointer to root of system can be useful, but keep system itself consolidated

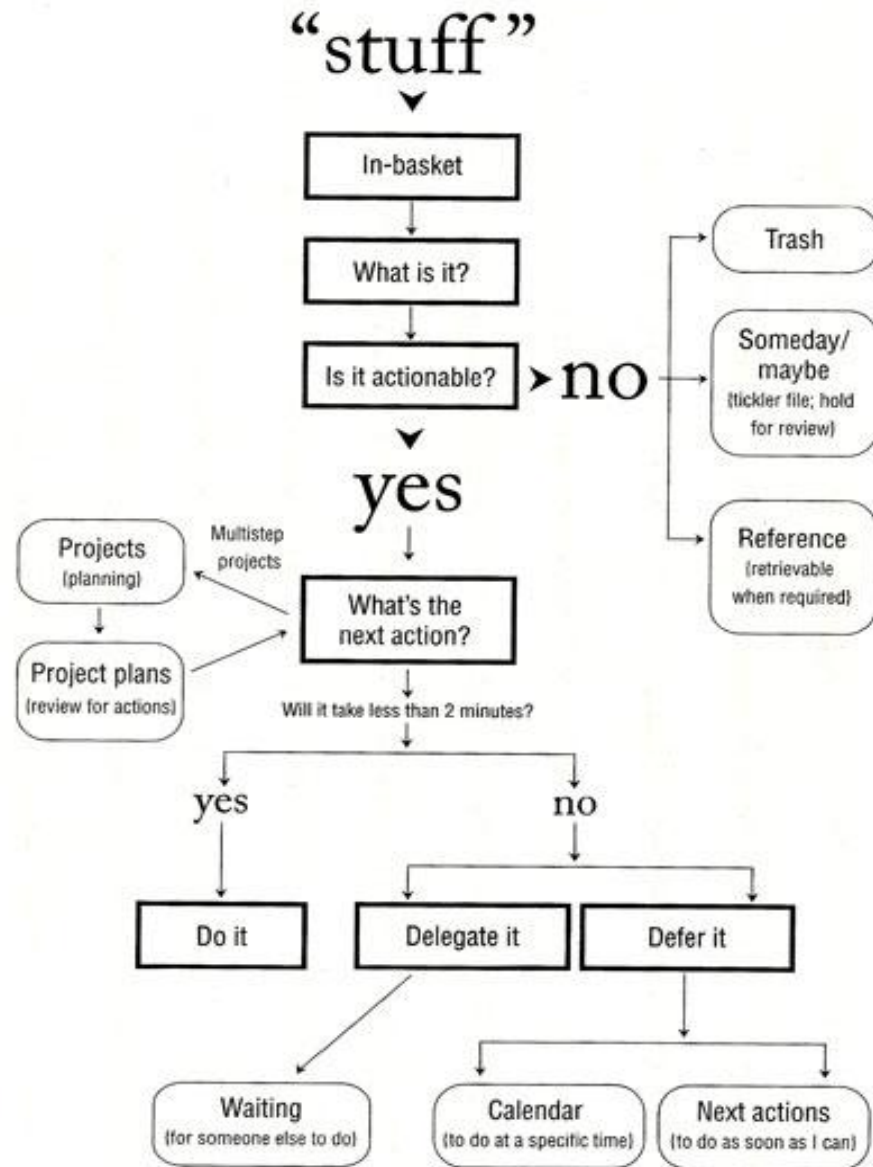
Potential Benefits of GTD

- Better cope with large number of demands on time and attention
- Actively decide which items receive attention
- Avoid unpleasant surprises

GTD Workflow Explained

GTD Workflow

THE ART OF GETTING THINGS DONE | PART ONE



WORKFLOW DIAGRAM—PROCESSING

"The Five Stages" 1

- Collect
- Process
- Organize
- Review
- Do

"The Five Stages" 2

- Collect
 - Every “open loop” should be collected in the system instead of your head
 - Have as few collection buckets as feasible
 - Empty the collection buckets regularly

"The Five Stages" 3

- Process
 - Classify every incoming piece of information in terms of future action
 - Decide the fate of each collected item
 - Some (many?) items are instant junk
- Organize
 - Allocate followup for actionable items
 - "If it will take less than 2 minutes, do it now"

"The Five Stages" 4

- Review
 - Do weekly review of system to make informed choices and prepare for coming week
- Do
 - Choosing actions relative to multiple time-scales: Long-term, current day, current moment

Key Components of the Workflow

Projects

- Keep a master list of all projects
- Set criteria for success so you know when a project is finished
- Keep track of related references and future actions
- Keep track of "next action" for each project

Next actions

- “What is the next action?”
- You can "do" an action, you can't "do" a project
- If stuck, ask yourself: what is the next "physical action" required to move the project forward?
- Organize tasks by "context" as well as priority

Choosing what action to do at a given time

- Four criteria
 - Context
 - Priority
 - Time Available
 - Energy Available

Inbox to empty

- Empty collection buckets regularly
- Includes email inbox
- Don't have to act on every email, but should know which ones require action

Mind sweep

- Periodically stop to write down a list of all the things that are “nagging at” your mind
- Put those things into your system and deal with them like any other incoming “stuff”
- Carry writing or recording tools with you at all times so you can capture ideas whenever they occur to you, then add them to the system for processing

Useful tools

Filing

- Single alphabetized general reference filing system
- Labelmakers are useful
- Keep plenty of file folders handy
- Make it as easy as possible to create a new file
- Purge/Archive annually

Tickler file

- 43 folders
 - 1 folder for each of the 12 months
 - 1 folder for each of the next 31 days
- Review “current day” daily
- Plant reminders for your future self
 - Ideas and physical artifacts
 - Bills, event tickets
 - Items to revisit (e.g. things you can’t classify elsewhere yet)

Weekly review

- Insure all collection buckets are emptied and processed
- Review and update project list
- Identify “next actions” for all projects
- Evaluate progress on projects and rebalance priorities

Caveats

- Don't fall in the trap of "playing with the system" in lieu of doing actual work
- If it doesn't work for you, adapt it or drop it

Summary

- Download “mental clutter” into a system you can rely on yourself to review
- Make a commitment to review the system
- Make informed decisions about how to act on the items in the system