

Idea

Modern Technology in the information age means that a lot of our work is knowledge work. This is cognitive work with without clear boundaries (when am I done with this?); which is an “open loop.” Open loops, or unfinished commitments cost us energy; they wear us down and impair executive functioning (e.g., attention, concentration, problem-solving abilities). Most of us already are doing many of the things we need to do in order to be successful, but they are not organized into a coherent system.

The Getting Things Done (GTD) principles and methodology are a coherent system and are simple to execute. The five main steps: 1) **Capture** the open loops, 2) **Clarify** what the task is, and 3) **Organize** the tasks into appropriate lists kept close at hand. 4) **Reflect** on the lists regularly so you know what is the best thing to be doing at any given moment, and 5) **Engage**—in other words, do it.

Remember: **every behavioral change takes practice** and almost everyone relapses at some point—so don't give up. Learn to recognize and appreciate your own small steps forward, and you will see results.

Tips

- 1) **Quit trying to “multitask”**; most people who think they are multitasking are just doing task-switching and are less efficient than they believe they are.
- 2) **Think about the end result** of what you want to accomplish, then determine the next step.
- 3) **Use your calendar** for time sensitive issues, not for to-do lists.

Web

gettingthingsdone.com gives you podcasts, tutorials, courses on using this system for productivity.

Book

Getting Things Done, by David Allen. This is the best productivity and organizing system I have seen, and I think the book is the best reference. Web sites will give you information and ideas, but for a cohesive and coherent explanation, this is unsurpassed. Like he says: read it once and start applying it—then after 6-8 months read it again. It will take you to a new level of productivity.

Contact

Feel free to contact me with any questions about using this system. I've used it for over 10 years and I highly recommend it. I'm not employed by the GTD group and don't receive any compensation for promoting this system; I just use it and like it.

MORE PRODUCTIVE, LESS REACTIVE

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