

THE WEEKLY REVIEW

—DAVID ALLEN

So, OK folks, this may seem like more hokey stuff-I-should-do-but-never-do stuff. Honestly, this is what I do to keep myself sane and in control. This is not theoretical or out of some book. This is literally, blow-by-blow, what I do at least once a week. It is the one factor upon which your success with Mind Like Water technology hinges. Do it, it lives and grows. Don't do it, it dies. If you don't yet have this habit, then I recommend that you insert into your calendar for the next four Fridays—"do weekly review." Review this for the first couple of weeks, and then it will probably become second nature to you. I suggest, also, that you consider creating your own customized weekly review checklist with reminders that are unique to your life. I keep my own personal Weekly Review as a list so I can remind myself of what I need to think about to get to a clean slate.

KEY STEPS FOR A WEEKLY REVIEW

This is the critical behavior to make your integrated life management system a vital, dynamic reality, and for fully implementing the Getting Things Done[®] methodology.

A great time to do it is early Friday afternoon, as it will invariably surface small actions which could get completed if you can catch people still at work.

COLLECT LOOSE PAPERS AND MATERIALS

Gather all accumulated business cards, receipts, and miscellaneous paper-based materials into your in-tray.

GET "IN" TO ZERO

Process completely all outstanding paper materials, journal and meeting notes, voicemails, dictation, and emails.

EMPTY YOUR HEAD

Put in writing and process any uncaptured new projects, action items, waiting fors, someday/maybes, etc.

REVIEW NEXT ACTIONS LISTS

Mark off completed actions. Review for reminders of further action steps to record.

REVIEW PREVIOUS CALENDAR DATA

Review past calendar in detail for remaining action items, reference data, etc., and transfer into the active system.

REVIEW UPCOMING CALENDAR

Review upcoming calendar events—long and short term. Capture actions triggered.

REVIEW WAITING FOR LIST

Record appropriate actions for any needed follow-up. Check off received ones.

REVIEW PROJECT (AND LARGER OUTCOME) LISTS

Evaluate status of projects, goals and outcomes, one by one, ensuring at least one current action item on each. Browse through project plans, support material and any other work-in-progress material to trigger new actions, completions, waiting for, etc.

REVIEW ANY RELEVANT CHECKLISTS

Use as a trigger for any new actions.

REVIEW SOMEDAY/MAYBE LIST

Review for any projects or next actions which may now have become active, and transfer to the appropriate list. Delete items no longer of interest.

BE CREATIVE & COURAGEOUS

Any new, wonderful, hare-brained, creative, thought-provoking, risk-taking ideas to add into your system?

PS:

Here's an email that I got from someone who was implementing this process. It might be useful for some of you just beginning to build in the review as a regular habit.

"I have a suggestion to pass on to those adding the Weekly Review process to their personal organizational strategy. Be patient and keep trying! My inboxes at home and at work, as well as my other input channels like notes and email, were out of control for so long that I'm still going through and cleaning them out to make them manageable! Being a single mother who works full-time I also get more interruptions than I get even small blocks of time to concentrate, but I'm not giving up. I know that David does counsel patience, but I can say from personal experience that this is crucial to having success with the process. So remind new Weekly Reviewers to keep at it, as it may take several tries to get all the way through and then get it to the point where it's manageable. Putting these strategies to work for me has helped immensely."

—Ginny @ MIT

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