

PRESENTATION

Getting Things Done, Simplified

David Allen's system for moving every open loop out of your head and into a trusted list.



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OVERVIEW

The Core Idea

Allen says **there is an inverse relationship between things on your mind and those things getting done**. GTD records every task outside your head, then breaks it into actions with a clear next step. First published in 2001, revised in 2015.

▮ Explore the **4 core pillars** that define this topic — each backed by research and real-world insight.

01 Open loops

KEY

Anything with an unclear outcome or no defined next action. Allen also calls it stuff.

02 Trusted system

CORE

An external record you rely on, so your mind can focus on the task at hand.

03 The tools

FOCUS

An inbox, a trash can, a reference filing system, several lists and a calendar.

04 Tech neutral

IMPACT

Paper or digital both work. Allen suggests starting on paper.

The System in Four Numbers

Each number is a rule from the method you can turn into a routine.

[↑ Key Metrics](#)

5

WORKFLOW STAGES

Capture, clarify, organize, reflect, engage.

- ▲ First edition: collect, process, organize, plan, do

8

END POINTS

Every inbox item lands in exactly one place.

- ▲ Trash, someday, reference, calendar and more

2 min

DO-IT-NOW RULE

If it takes under two minutes, finish it and check it off.

- ▲ Everything longer goes on a list

6

HORIZONS OF FOCUS

From current actions up to life purpose.

- ▲ Reviewed in the weekly review

□ GTD works **bottom-up**: control the daily inputs first, then the big goals get attention.



Key Insight

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The Workflow, Step by Step

4-Step Framework

01

Capture

Collect all stuff in an inbox.

- ▶ Physical tray or email inbox
- ▶ Capture everything, no filtering
- ▶ Not a to-do list
- ▶ Empty it daily or weekly

02

Clarify

Decide what each item is.

- ▶ Is it actionable?
- ▶ Under two minutes: do it
- ▶ Someone else's: delegate it
- ▶ Two or more steps: a project

03

Organize

Put it where it belongs.

- ▶ Context next-action lists
- ▶ Waiting for list
- ▶ Someday/maybe list
- ▶ Calendar for fixed dates

04

Reflect and engage

Review, then pick the next task.

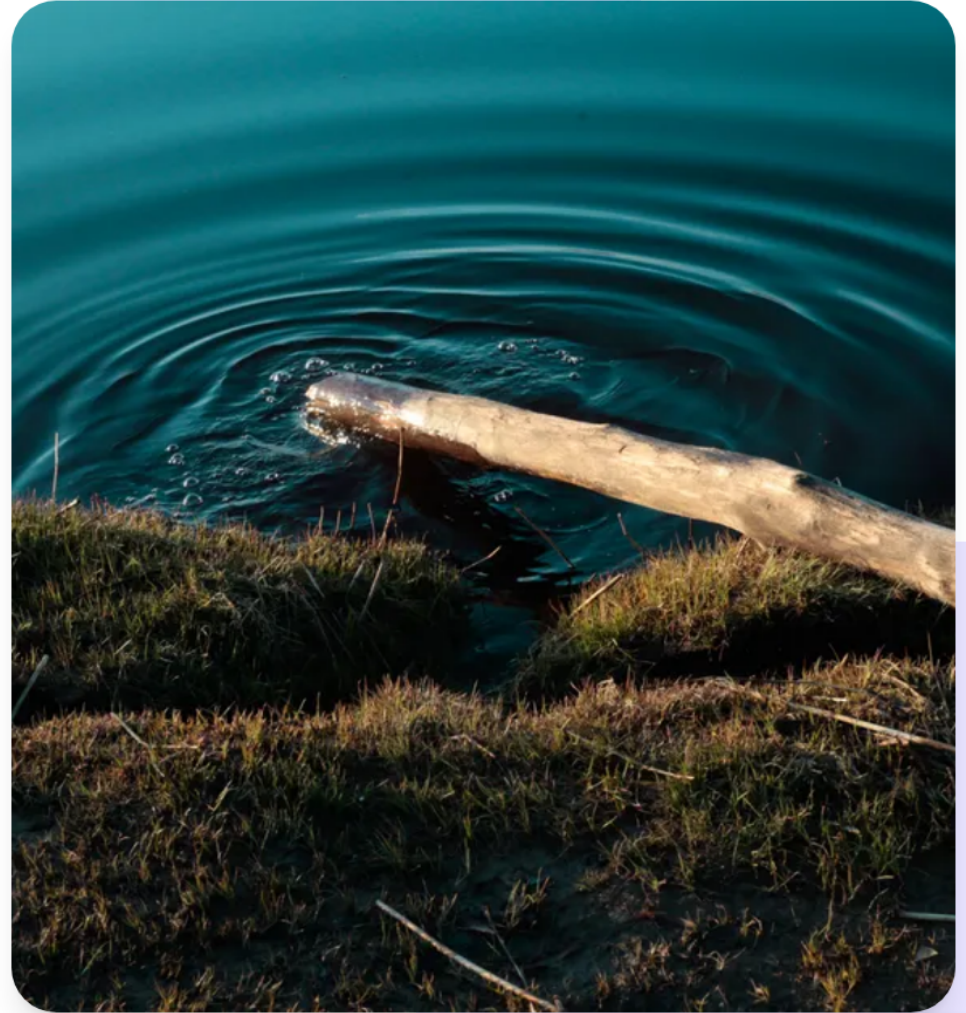
- ▶ One next action per project
- ▶ Weekly review of all lists
- ▶ Choose by context and time
- ▶ Then by energy and priority



Mind Like Water

Allen borrows a martial arts simile. Throw a small object into a pool and it makes a small splash, then goes still. A large object makes a large splash, then goes still again.

The goal of the control processes in GTD is to get everything except the current task out of your head, so each new input gets a fitting response instead of constant background stress.



AUTOMATE THE ROUTINE

A GTD Week for a Personal Agent

The parts of GTD that repeat on a schedule, based on the method's own rules.

- Evidence-backed insights
- 4 proven advantages
- Ready to implement

1

Daily inbox sweep

Empty every inbox to zero by sorting each item into its end point.

NEW

2

Context lists

Group next actions by place or tool, such as calls or errands.

CORE

3

Waiting-for nudges

Follow up on delegated items you chose to track.

PRO

4

Weekly review

Walk the six horizons and set one next action per project.

KEY



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