# Getting Things Done - glorified common sense -

- mastering workflow
  - stress = "open loops"
    - Def.
      - "open loops" = improperly managed commitments made or accepted
    - Ex.
      - Make every real estate developer in Romania build green
      - Replace flipchart paper
      - Respond to EMAIL
    - how to deal?
      - EXERCISE
        - think
          - if this were the only thing on my plate, what would be the next physical action I would take to make this go forward?
        - clarify next action
          - THINKING
            - why?
              - what's the effect now?
            - Ex.
              - the mind is very very stupid in dealing with CONTEXTS
            - TIP
              - flashlight - batteries
      - why?
        - thinking about things out of context is very tring
        - "Boy, that was an amorphous blob of undoability!"
          - most to-do lists are STUFF
      - the transformation of STUFF
        - STUFF = anything that you've allowed in your world (physical, mental), that doesn't belong where it is, but for which you haven't yet determined the desired outcome and next action step
        - after that, it's all about CRANKING WIDGETS (merely physical labor)
          - stuff is how things show up - it's our work to transform it
      - get things OFF your mind
        - clarify next action
          - if it's on your mind, your mind isn't clear
            - use collection buckets
            - sort collection buckets
        - keep reminders in a system that you review regularly
      - managing action
        - NOT
          - managing time
          - managing information
          - managing priorities
        - the only thing you CAN manage these is by managing your actions
        - you can't DO a project
          - bottom-up approach
            - start with the most mundane, ground-floor level of current activity and commitments
            - once you clear the mundane away, you can think at a high, visionary level
      - keys
        - get things out of your head
          - everything
            - small
            - big
            - clear
            - unclear
            - personal
            - office
- five stages
  - 1 Collect
    - 100% of the open loops
      - sources of open loops
        - email inbox
        - RSS reader
        - phone calls
        - magazines
        - notebook
        - meeting agendas
        - stuff in our drawers
        - mind
        - etc etc
      - how to identify "open loops"?
        - "should"
        - "need to"
        - "ought to"
        - "should I?"
        - "I'm going to"
        - "I don't know what else to do"
      - collection bucket tools
        - in-basket
        - paper note-taking device
          - notebooks
          - slips of paper
          - post--its
        - laptop
        - voice-recording
        - email
      - success factors
        - get it all out of your head
          - have collection buckets ALWAYS near you
          - at work, at home, on the road...
          - don't try to process as it comes in - just collect
        - as few collection buckets as you can get by with
          - don't write notes in many different places
          - collect paper materials in single inboxes
        - empty the buckets regularly
          - does NOT mean "finish"
          - take out one single item
          - decide what the NA is
          - place in the appropriate place
            - you need to have a clear system with simple, clear options
          - NEVER put back in "In"
          - "Not emptying your in-basket is like having trashcans that nobody ever dumps - you just have to keep buying new ones to hold all your trash."
  - 2 Process
    - gets you from stuff in buckets to organized actions
    - item-by-item
    - you can't organize stuff before you process it
      - you can only organize actions - what needs to be done
    - workflow:
      - FLIPCHART
    - primer on determining NAs
      - absolute next physical action
      - it must be something you can actually act on NOW, if you had the time
        - ex.
          - "Do my taxes"
            - becomes
              - "Call Diana to ask if she knows a good accountant"
                - goes on "Calls list"
          - "Go to conference"
            - becomes
              - "Ask Laurentiu to find out speakers, background, location, cost."
                - goes on "Agendas - Laurentiu"
      - these are NOT NAs
        - "decide"
          - usually you need to
            - gather more information
            - organize the information
          - the decision is the outcome of the info gathering and organizing
      - USE the 2-min rule...
        - you'll need a timer
          - importance: others often depend on an action of yours that only takes 2 min
        - sometimes you'll want MORE or LESS than 2 minutes... whatever works for you!
      - NA verbs
        - 43folders.com > 2006 > 11 > 14 > Project-versus-next-action#more-788
  - 3 organize
    - from processing, we get the "outer ring"
      - non-actionable
        - trash
          - don't leave any trash among the good stuff
        - incubation
          - things you might WANT to do something about someday
          - types of incubators
            - someday / maybe
              - master list
              - subcategories
                - movies to see
                - books to read
                - trips to take
                - things to learn
                - etc.
            - tickler
              - "mail something to a future self"
              - you can use your calendar
                - March 15 - taxes due in a month
        - reference storage (and search)
          - one single system
          - one simple system
      - actionable
        - list of projects
          - Def.
            - project = any desired result that requires more than one action step
            - might be small things that you wouldn't call projects
          - Ex.
            - mine?
          - no order, no priority... just a list that you can review regularly
          - remember - you can't DO a project... you can only do enough of the actions so that you achieve the result
        - project support
          - what?
            - project plans
            - support materials and reference files
          - where?
            - out of sight
              - unless the project is really hot
            - best to keep project plan AND support materials together
            - you can keep support materials for active and non-active projects together... you'll review the project list to know which ones to review
        - calendar
          - only three things
            - time-specific actions
              - aka appointments
            - day-specific actions
              - anytime on a day, but MUST happen on that particular day
              - Ex.
                - Cristophe comes back from tha Bahamas on Thursday but leaves for Gran Canarias on Friday
            - day-specific information
              - directions to appointments
              - activities that others are involved in
              - events of interest
              - tickler information
                - ex. - call someone 1 day after they come back from vacation
          - NO MORE daily to-do lists
            - every day has new input, shifting priorities...
            - uncompleted daily to-do list = low self-esteem
            - dilutes emphasis on the things that DO have to be done on that day
            - the calendar is sacred territory
            - the only exception admitted
              - to-do lists that you throw away at the end of the day
              - a sort of "focus" on the day
        - list of reminders of next actions
          - everything that's not on the calendar
          - if you have just a few... it can be one master list
          - otherwise... you'll have to assign them to contexts
            - calls
            - emails
            - agendas to discuss with ...
            - draft...
            - errands
            - shopping
        - list of reminders of things you're waiting for
          - from whom?
          - keep your own list of everything - WITH DATES
          - trick:
            - cc: waiting.for.reply.sara@gmail.com
      - all of these buckets have to have "hard edges"
    - CHECKLISTS
  - 4 review
    - most of the magic is here ...
    - WEEKLY
      - why?
        - to keep it on paper, not your mind!
        - to get back on track after a few crazy days
      - how to do this?
        - make sure everything has been collected
          - email
          - notebooks
          - computer desktop
          - any notes in your computer
          - meeting agendas
        - process everything
        - check all open loops
          - check calendar
          - next actions list
            - including Agendas
          - project list
          - waiting for list
          - someday / maybe list
        - update the lists
        - get clean, clear, current and complete
      - how long?
        - typically ... 2 hours
    - short one - daily
      - calendar
      - next action list
      - maybe, project list
  - 5 do
    - three possible models for making action decisions
      - four-criteria model for choosing actions in the moment
        - context
        - time available
        - energy available
        - priority
      - threefold model for evaluating daily work
        - doing pre-defined work
        - doing work as it shows up
          - danger - you lose sight of it
          - keep a list right in front of your eyes
          - if it's that kind of a day - you need reviews every 30 min - 1 hour
        - defining work
          - ex.
            - weekly review
            - project planning
            - meetings
    - at any moment, you need
      - to decide what you'll DO
      - to decide what you will NOT DO
      - feel good about your decisions
    - CRANCKING WIDGETS
- don't we do this anyway?
  - yes, but any weak link breaks the system
  - trying to do all the stages at once = tremendous drain on energy
- how to get here?
  - choose the simplest system you can get away with
    - paper!
      - notebook
      - cards
    - computer?
      - MS Outlook = noooooo!
      - options?
        - ThinkingRock
        - Vitalist
        - many others... read 43folders.com, but don't spend too much time playing with the tools
  - set up the system
    - physical space
  - set aside a good period of time to gather all of your open loops