

The Art of Leadership and Time Management - Part Three

Do you find yourself constantly running from one issue to the next without any margin in your life?

Do you feel like you are over-committed to such a degree that the truly important things have been slipping a little?

Do you wish for a reset button and dream of starting over someplace new, just like you did last time? (How did that work out for you?)

Many times we neglect the lasting work of ministry for the instant gratification of solving a problem or being the hero. The thing is, nobody wins when church activity replaces people development. Pastors, more than anyone, must learn to be disciplined to focus, and do only what only they can do.

A QUICK SUMMARY - David Allen, [Getting Things Done](#)

Since it was first published over 15 years ago, David Allen's *Getting Things Done* has become one of the most influential business books of its era, and the ultimate book on personal organization. "GTD" is now shorthand for an entire way of approaching professional and personal tasks, and has spawned an entire culture of websites, organizational tools, seminars, and offshoots.

Allen has rewritten the book from start to finish, tweaking his classic text with important perspectives on the new workplace, and adding material that will make the book fresh and relevant for years to come. This new edition of *Getting Things Done* will be welcomed not only by its hundreds of thousands of existing fans but also by a whole new generation eager to adopt its proven principles.

A SIMPLE SOLUTION

It is possible for a person to have an overwhelming number of things to do and still function productively with a clear head and a positive sense of relaxed control. Getting on top of everything instead of being buried underneath it, however, will most likely require a significant paradigm shift in your day-to-day work.

The skills needed to "get things done" are based on two key objectives:

1. Capturing all the things that need to be done
2. Disciplining yourself to make front-end decisions about all the inputs you have captured

The burst of energy implied in these two objectives is considerable, and most people will resist the effort needed to accomplish it. Most of our daily activity is already defined for us by the undone tasks and unmoved things staring at us.

What if, instead, we “thought” about our work before we actually did it? Thinking in terms of desired outcomes is one of the most effective ways available for making our wishes reality.

*There are five discrete stages that we go through as we deal with our work. We (1) **collect** things that command our attention; (2) **process** what they mean and what to do about them; and (3) **organize** the results, which we (4) **review** as options for what we chose to (5) **do**.*

Collect

It is important to know what needs to be collected and how to collect it most effectively so you can process it appropriately. In order for your mind to let go of the lower-level task of trying to hang on to everything, you have to know that you have truly captured everything that might represent something you have to do, and that at some point in the near future you will process and review all of it.

Process

What do you need to ask yourself (and answer) about each e-mail, voice-mail, memo, or self-generated idea that comes your way? This is the component of action management that forms the basis for your personal organization. You organize the actions you’ll need to take based on the decisions you’ve made about what needs to be done.

Organize

There are eight discrete categories of reminders and materials, which together make up a total system for organizing just about anything that may be on your plate, or could be added to it, on a daily and weekday basis.

- For nonactionable items, the possible categories are *trash*, *incubation tools*, and *reference storage*.
- To manage actionable things, you will need a list of *projects*, *storage or files* for project plans and materials, a *calendar*, a list of *reminders of next actions*, and a list of *reminders of things you are waiting for*.

Review

You need to be able to review the whole picture of your life and work at appropriate intervals and appropriate levels. For most people, the magic of workflow management is realized in the consistent use of the review phase. This is where you take a look at all your outstanding projects and open loops on a weekly basis. It’s your chance to scan all the defined actions and options before you, thus radically increasing the efficacy of the choices you make about what you’re doing at any point in time.

Do

The basic purpose of this workflow-management process is to facilitate good choices about what you're doing at any point in time. With the proper preplanning you can feel much more confident about your choices. You can move from hope to trust in your actions, immediately increasing your speed and effectiveness.

David Allen, [Getting Things Done](#)

A NEXT STEP

We've all been up against the wall of too many things to do, and we've gotten temporary relief by "making a list." But these Band-Aids don't work as an ongoing strategy.

When most people sit down to write a list, they're actually combining all five of the phases listed above. The list is an effort to simultaneously grab things out of their mind, decide what they mean, arrange them in some logical or meaningful fashion, jump immediately to an evaluation of each against the other, and then chose the "most important" thing to do.

People who do this are usually rewarded with a short-term pay-off of confusion relieved, but they're left with a gnawing vulnerability to what's uncaptured, unprocessed, unorganized, unseen, and underestimated.

The five stages listed above, unlike the other solutions in this Remix, cannot be selectively chosen and experimented with. This solution is all in, or not in at all!

If you are serious – really serious – about managing your time and becoming more productive, there are no short cuts. Just dive into the process listed above, and you will find tremendous benefit both along the way and on a regular basis.

[Check these recommended resources](#) for additional help from David Allen. To really implement these five stages, though, will require the book the excerpt above was taken from, [Getting Things Done](#).

You will increase your productivity and creativity exponentially when you think about the right things at the right time and have the tools to capture your value-added thinking.

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*This is part of a weekly series posting content from one of the most innovative content sources in the church world: **SUMS Remix** Book Summaries for church leaders.*

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solution is taken from a different book. Additionally, a practical action step is included with each solution.

As a church leader you get to scan relevant books based on practical tools and solutions to real ministry problems, not just by the cover of the book. Each post will have the edition number which shows the year and what number it is in the overall sequence. (SUMS Remix provides 26 issues per year, delivered every other week to your inbox).

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