

Getting Things Done

Der Antiverpeil Talk

2007-12-29,
Berlin

Overview

- **Introduction**

- The Problem: Why Things Are on your Mind
- The Idea: Outsource your Brain
- Methodologies
- Tools
- Getting started

About this talk

- Person
 - Stephan Schmieder (ssc)
 - Doing GTD since nine months

- Goal
 - making you *even more* productive

- When to ask questions
 - Small Q&A session after each topic
 - Shout if you got a question or can't hear me

Definitions

Project

- Task with more than one action item
 - e.g. do laundry

Action item

- Single physical action
 - e.g. collect clothes

Processing

- Organizing list items
 - e.g. divide dirty / dirty but wearable

Trusted system

- Regularly reviewed information buckets
 - e.g. todo-list, calendar

Open loop / „stuff“

- Something you haven't yet decided upon
 - e.g. repeating ideas / should-dos

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Why Things Are on your Mind

- You want something to be different than it currently is, and yet you haven't
 - clarified exactly what the intended outcome is
 - decided what the very next action step is
 - put reminders in a trusted system

- Your mind keeps reminding you of things when you can't do anything about them.
 - And it forgets to remind you when you have to do something.

- This constant, unproductive preoccupation with all the things we have to do is the single largest consumer of time and energy

- The lack of time is not the major issue
 - The real problem is a lack of clarity and definition

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Outsource your Brain

- If your mind is empty, it is always ready for anything

- Minimize open loops → relieve your processor
 - 1) Capture open loops outside your mind
 - 2) Clarify your commitment and decide what needs to be done
 - 3) Keep reminders of all actions in a trusted system

- Planning things ahead means
 - Knowing what to do
 - Doing things on “auto-pilot” / in “zombie-mode”

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The Natural Planning Model

- *Step 1: Defining purpose and principles*
 - It never hurts to ask the “why?” question
 - If you’re not totally clear about the purpose of what you’re doing, you have no chance of winning

- *Step 2: Outcome visioning*
 - Outcome thinking makes wishes reality
 - What are the deliverables?
 - Imagine how success looks, sounds and feels like

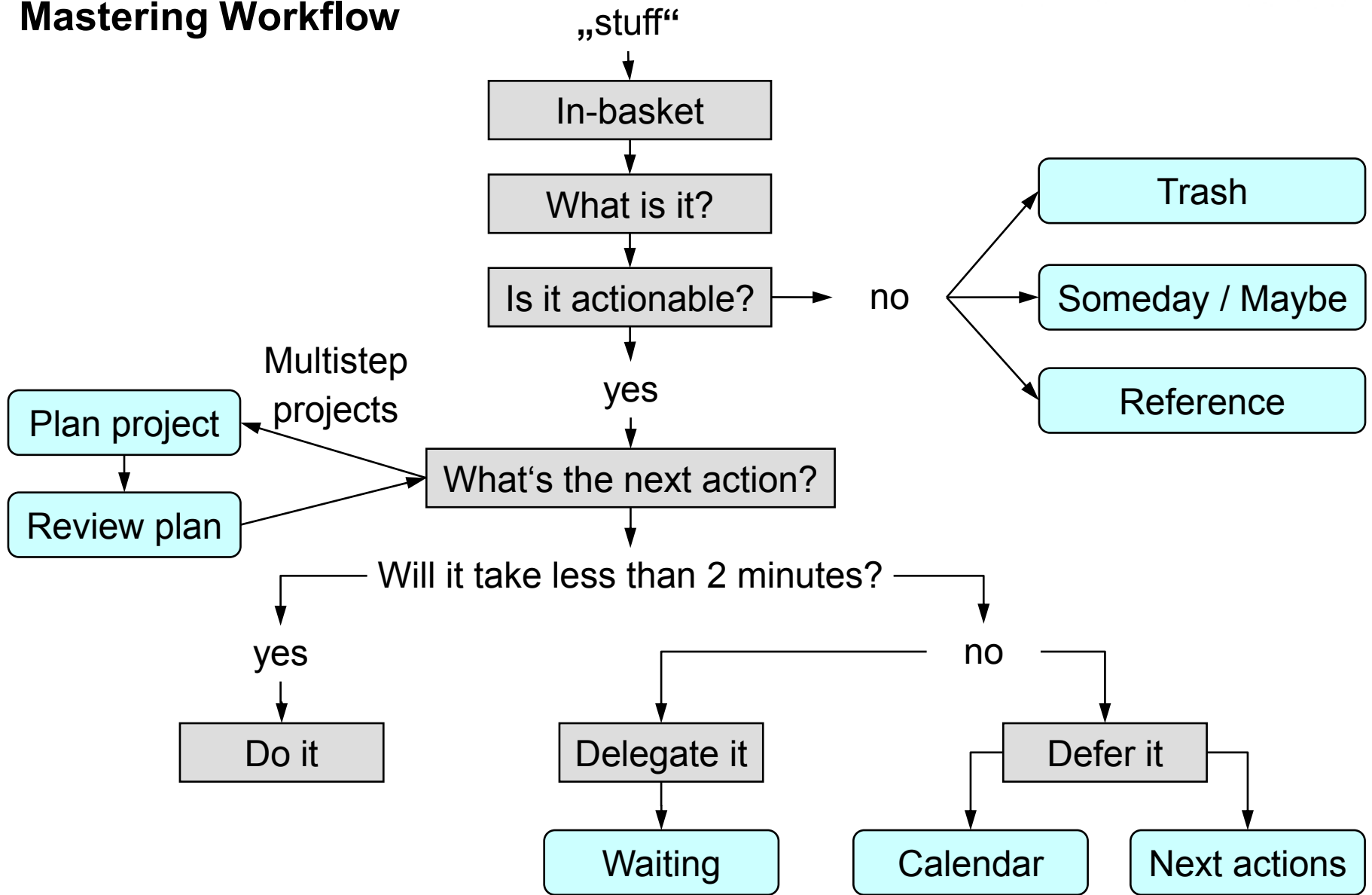
- *Step 3: Brainstorming*
 - The best way to get a good idea is to get lots of ideas

The Natural Planning Model

- *Step 4: Organizing*
 - 1) Identify significant pieces
 - 2) Sort by components, sequences, priorities
 - Make it MECE (mutually exclusive, commonly exhaustive)
 - 3) Detail to required degree

- *Step 5: Identifying next actions*
 - Decide on next actions for each currently moving part of the project
 - If the project is still on your mind, there's more planning to do
 - Force questions:
 - What's the next action here?
 - Who's doing what until when?

Mastering Workflow



Processing Email

- Email is just another way of delegating actions:

- Not actionable
- Someone else's responsibility
- Information request
- Not relevant at the moment
- Actionable

- Put to archive / reference material
- Delegate it
- Respond in 5 lines / 2 minutes
- Move to calendar, someday / maybe
- Transform to actions

- **Keep inbox empty**
- Batch-process emails and feeds

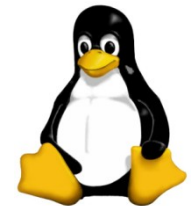
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ThinkingRock – todo-list on steroids

- Complete GTD workflow system
 - Inbox, Project planning, Task management, Calendar (ical), ...
 - needs better Filing and Brainstorming facilities
 - use Freemind* for now

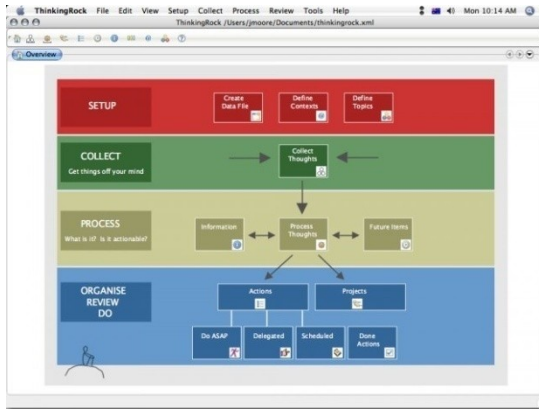
- Highly customizable
 - Powerful filter and sort functionality for actions
 - Context, Time, Energy, Priority, Due-date, Keywords, ...
 - Save filters / searches as tabs
 - Reoccurring actions
 - Sequenced actions



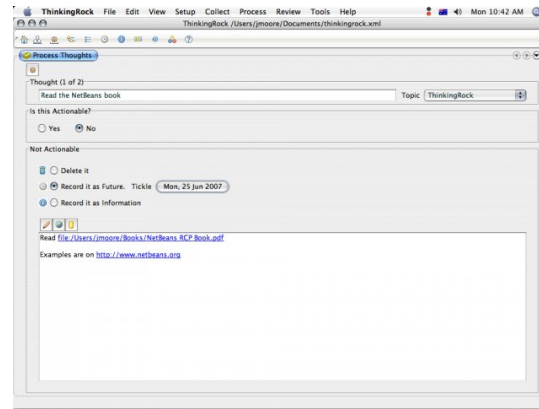
* <http://freemind.sf.net>

ThinkingRock – main screens

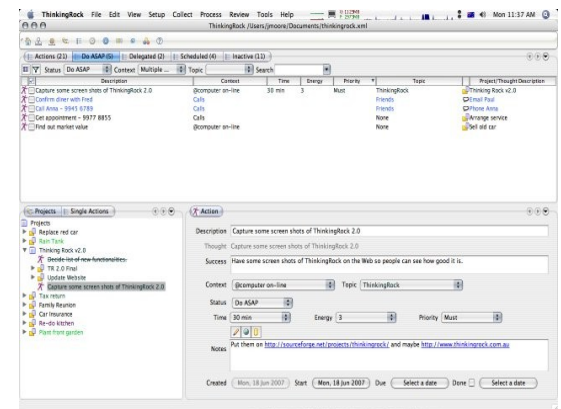
GTD overview



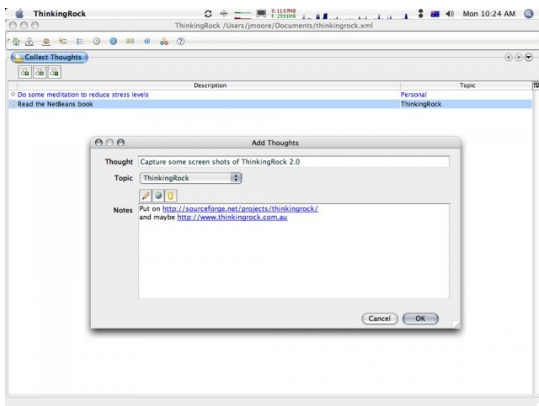
Create Someday / Maybe



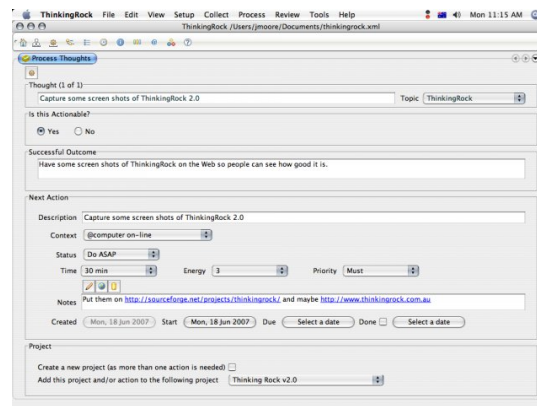
Review / Do actions



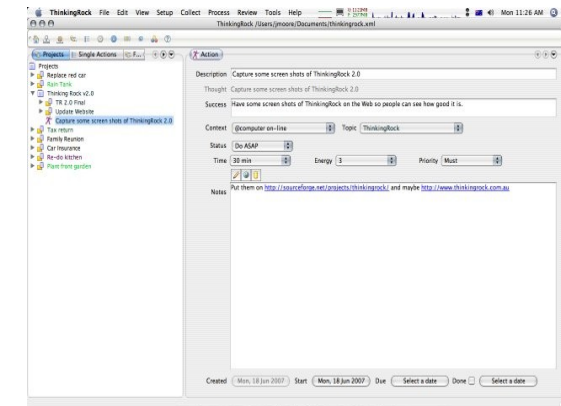
Collect thoughts



Create action



Review / Plan projects



ThinkingRock – Review / Do actions

The screenshot displays the ThinkingRock application interface. The top menu bar includes: ThinkingRock, File, Edit, View, Setup, Collect, Process, Review, Tools, Help. The window title is "ThinkingRock /Users/jmoore/Documents/thinkingrock.xml".

The main window shows a list of actions under the "Do ASAP (5)" filter. The table below represents the data shown in the screenshot:

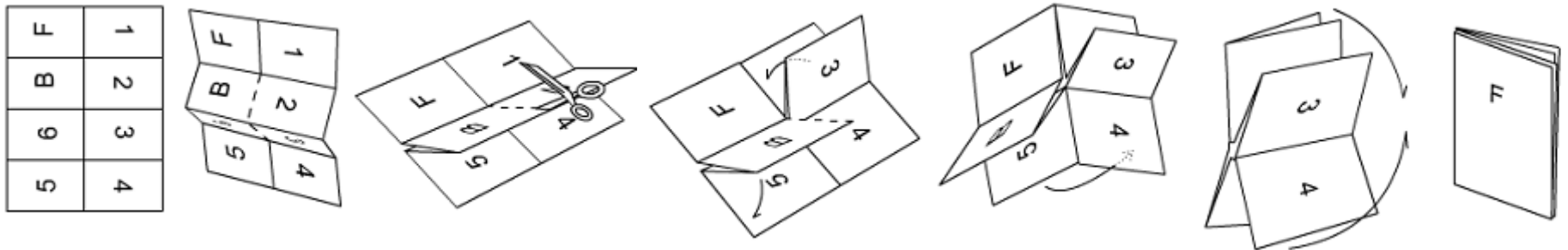
Description	Context	Time	Energy	Priority	Topic	Project/Thought Description
<input type="checkbox"/> Capture some screen shots of ThinkingRock 2.0	@computer on-line	30 min	3	Must	ThinkingRock	Thinking Rock v2.0
<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm diner with Fred	Calls				Friends	Email Paul
<input type="checkbox"/> Call Anna - 9945 6789	Calls				Friends	Phone Anna
<input type="checkbox"/> Get appointment - 9977 8855	Calls				None	Arrange service
<input type="checkbox"/> Find out market value	@computer on-line				None	Sell old car

The bottom panel shows the "Action" details for the selected action:

- Description:** Capture some screen shots of ThinkingRock 2.0
- Thought:** Capture some screen shots of ThinkingRock 2.0
- Success:** Have some screen shots of ThinkingRock on the Web so people can see how good it is.
- Context:** @computer on-line
- Topic:** ThinkingRock
- Status:** Do ASAP
- Time:** 30 min
- Energy:** 3
- Priority:** Must
- Notes:** Put them on <http://sourceforge.net/projects/thinkingrock/> and maybe <http://www.thinkingrock.com.au>
- Created:** Mon, 18 Jun 2007
- Start:** Mon, 18 Jun 2007
- Due:** Select a date
- Done:**
- Select a date:** Select a date

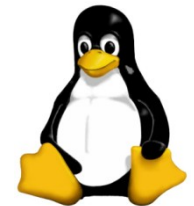
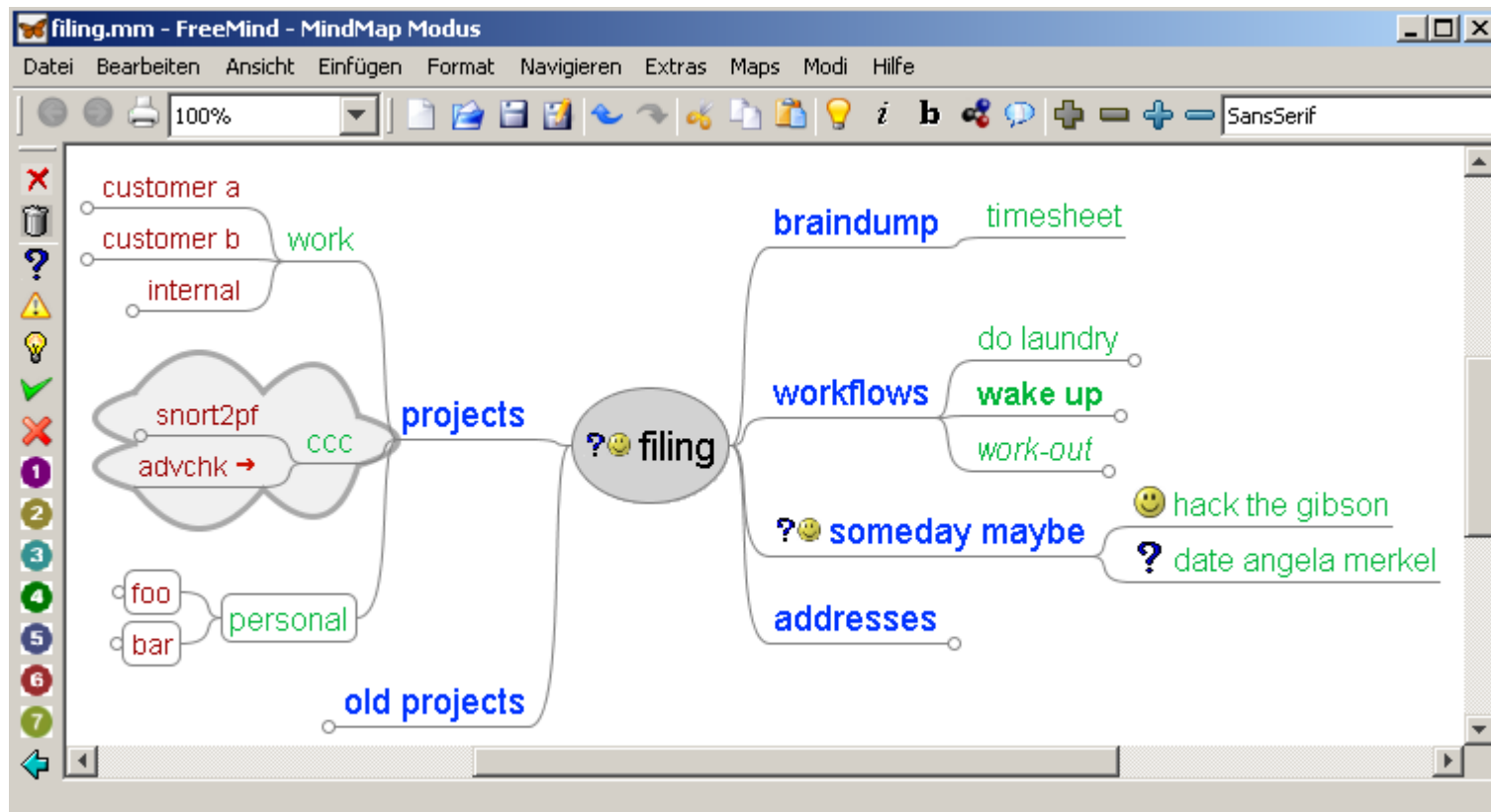
PocketMod – disposable personal organizer

- Sheet of paper with eight content areas
 - Fits into back pocket or purse
 - As cheap as one piece of paper
 - Works without battery
 - Daily sync with ThinkingRock
 - Opens like a book
 - Incredibly useful
- Use Cases
 - Todo lists
 - Taking notes
 - Calendar
 - Carries business cards
 - RSS Feeds
 - ...the sky is the limit



Freemind

- Quickly gather and organize information
- Brainstorm, keep notes
- Reference system for addresses and project support material



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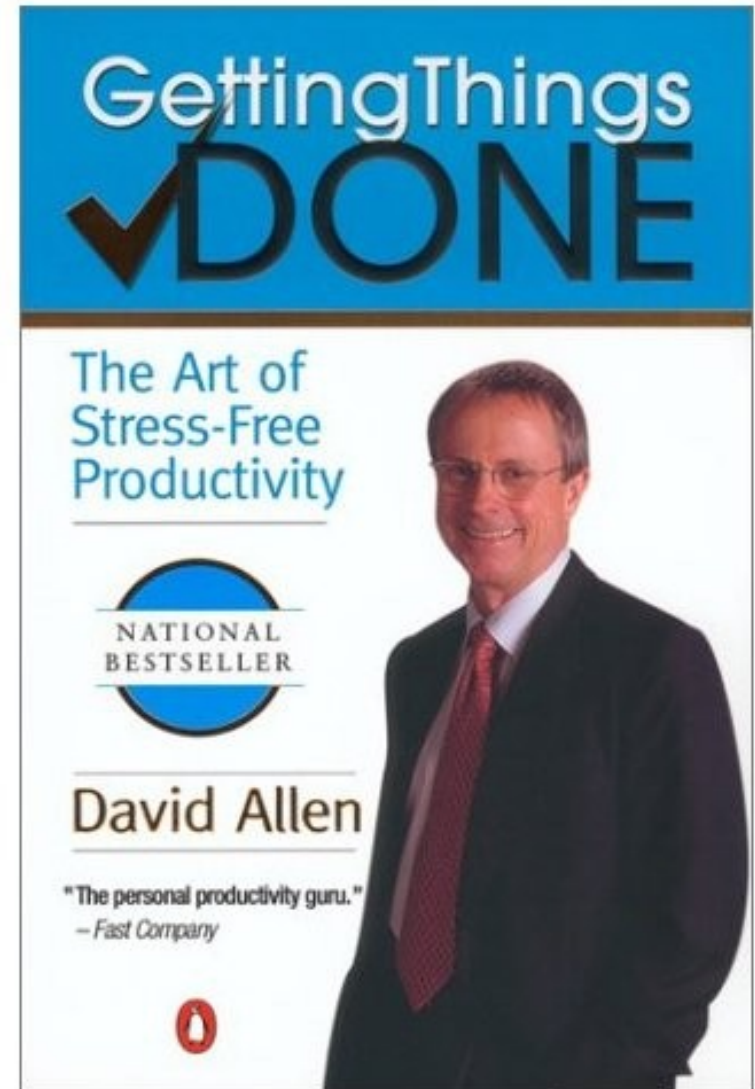
It's 9:22am Wednesday morning.

What do you do?

Getting started

Pointers

- The Manual
 - Getting Things Done by David Allen
<http://www.amazon.de/dp/0142000280>
 - Keylearnings mindmap
<http://unixgu.ru/papers/gtd.html>
- Blogs
 - <http://www.lifehack.org>
 - <http://www.zenhabs.net>
 - <http://www.lifeoptimizer.org/>
 - <http://www.imgriff.com>
- Tools
 - <http://www.thinkingrock.com.au>
 - <http://freemind.sf.net>



Getting Things Done

Thank you four your attention!

- Stephan Schmieder
stephan.schmieder@tngtech.com
- Slides available at
<http://unixgu.ru>
- Reality is negotiable =)

