

Should we invest time  
into Time Management?



Wednesday, April 27, 16

At personal level (or maybe always), time means effort. The effort to accomplishing something or to become something, or even accumulate something that we deem useful



# *Hopes*

*&*

# DREAMS

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This has to do with our hopes and dreams that we cultivate as we walk through life.



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But then reality strikes:  
e-mails, reports, papers, research (work), deadlines, meetings, conferences, etc....  
Not to mention the distractors: facebook, whatsapp, your cell phone..



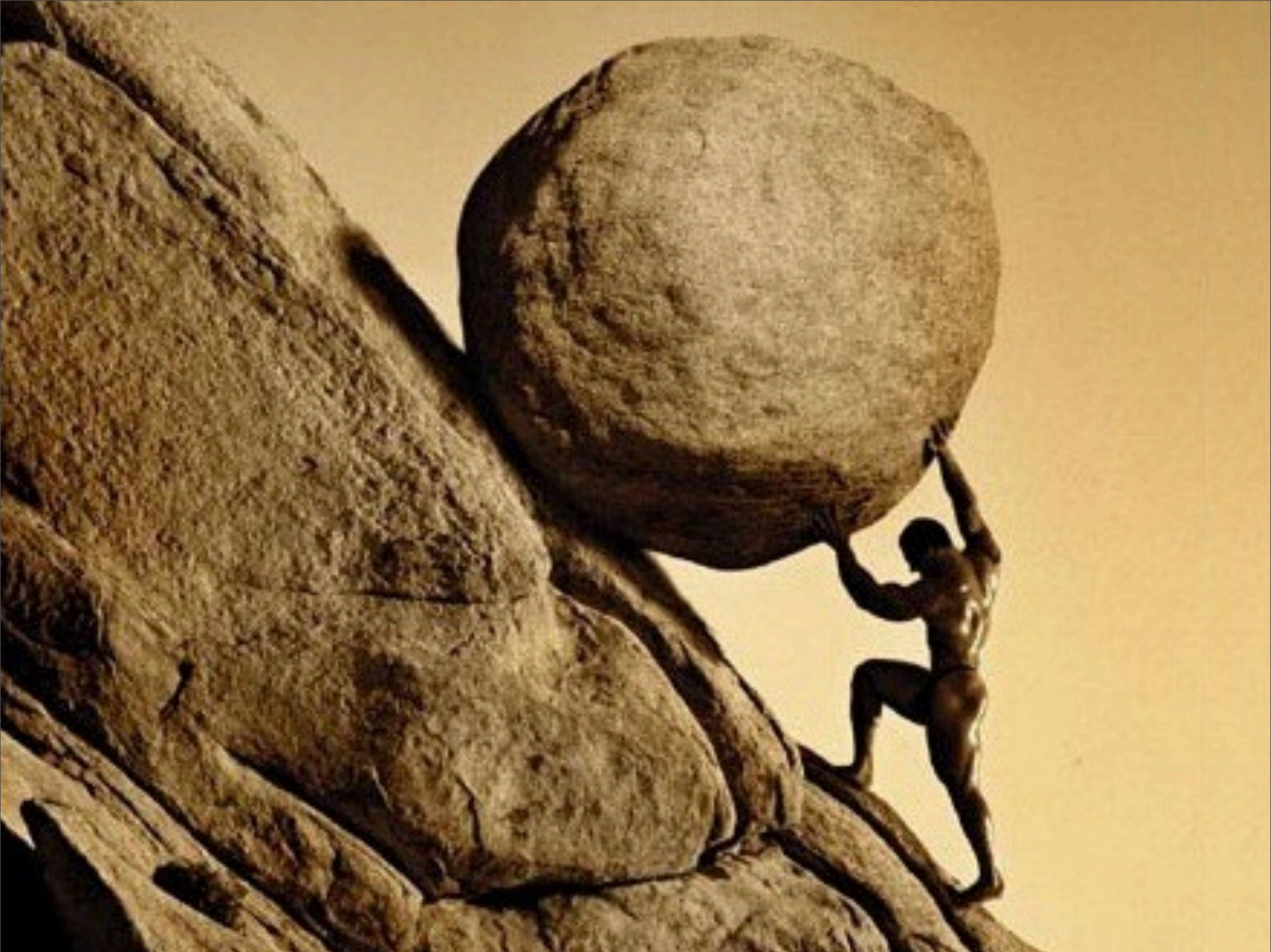
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Those points are related to different parts of your life and might cover different aspects, but they all share a common thing, they generate information and fill your head and make use of your CPU power.  
Quite a lot actually.



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They do take a lot time to be processed. And if you don't learn how to process them in the right way you feel like Sisyphus.



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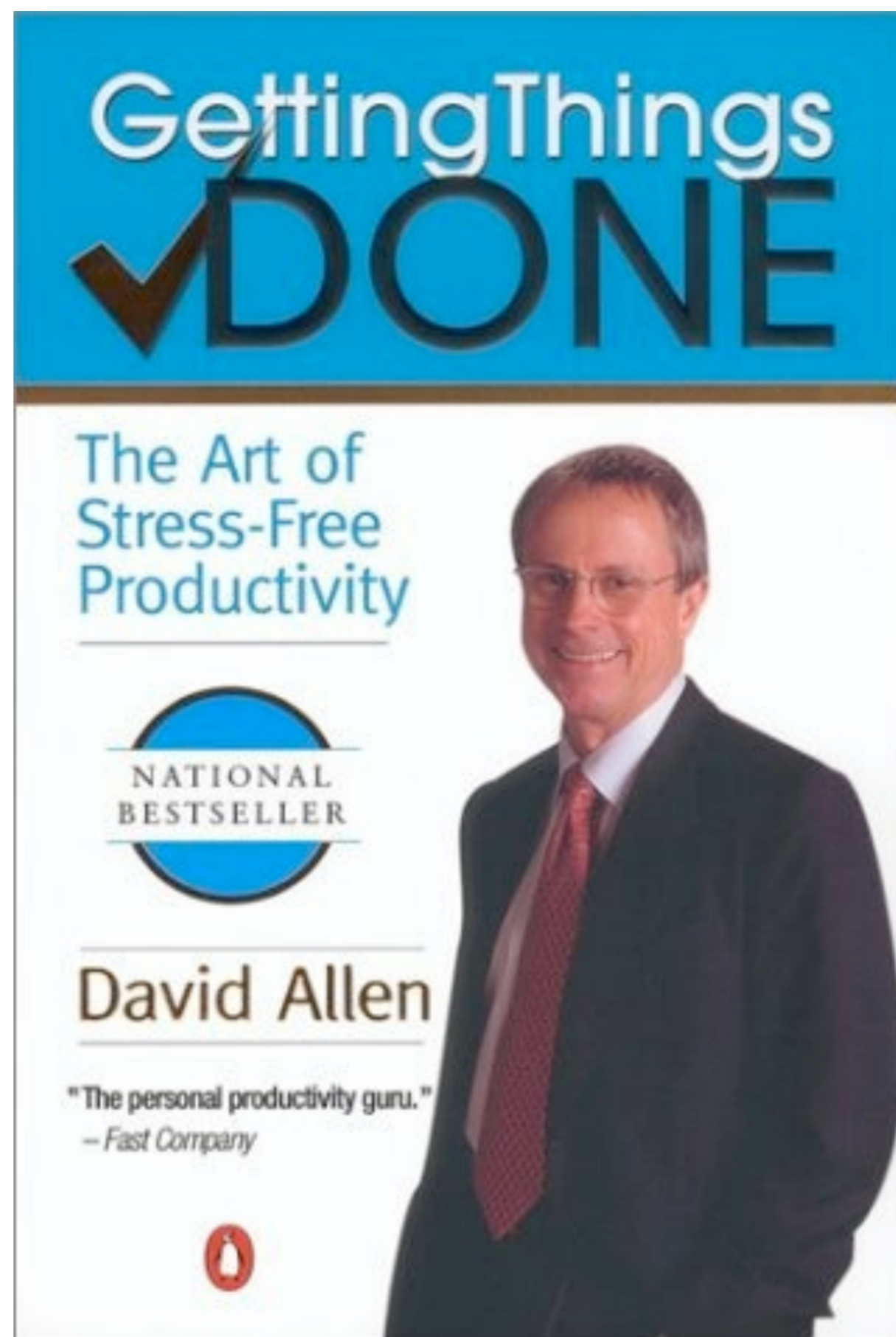
Sisyphus who defied the gods and put Death in chains so that no human needed to die. When Death was eventually liberated and it came time for Sisyphus himself to die, he concocted a deceit which let him escape from the underworld. Finally captured, the gods decided on his punishment for all eternity. He would have to push a rock up a mountain; upon reaching the top, the rock would roll down again, leaving Sisyphus to start over.

I look into that image and I feel like in a prison. In our lives, the rock that Sisyphus pulls up everyday are the things that come to our lives without a purpose. They are imposed (by the gods) and we have to do it.

Depending on its size, it really becomes a punishment.

Now how to deal with our rocks and yet find a sense of purpose and most important, find time for those things and get the rocks under control and eventually get rid of them or making them to become small pebbles... this is hard right, but yet we can learn.

This is the subject of this talk



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Let me start backwards, assuming that your rock is there and you have to deal with that. Later we will see how to, while rolling the rock up, to find ways to make a plan to scape from that punishment!

Disclaimer: you will hear that from somebody who is very, very disorganized and had to improve to survive (at work and at home!).

The first part is about this book, called GTD

# Getting Things Done



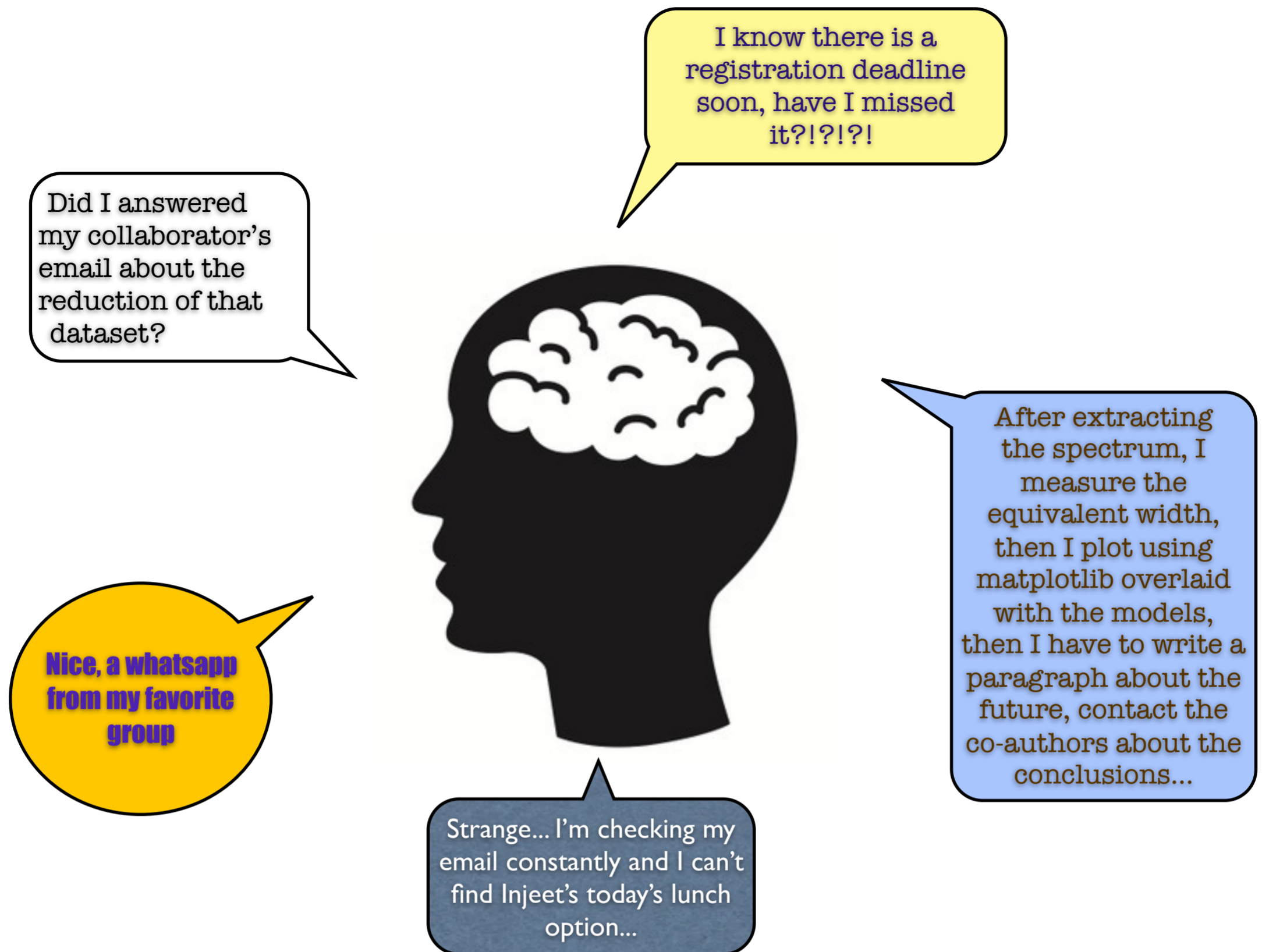
*David Allen*

“It’s possible 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. That’s a great way to live and work, at elevated levels of effectiveness and efficiency.”

# Getting Things Done



“**ANXIETY** is caused by a lack of control, organization, preparation, and action.”



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Your CPU power is spent in remembering things and managing interruptions. This creates many what David calls “open loops”

The number of open loops increases as we go on in life, we assume more responsibilities, have an increasingly number of different roles and gradually shift from a member of a team to assume leadership positions.

# Open Loops

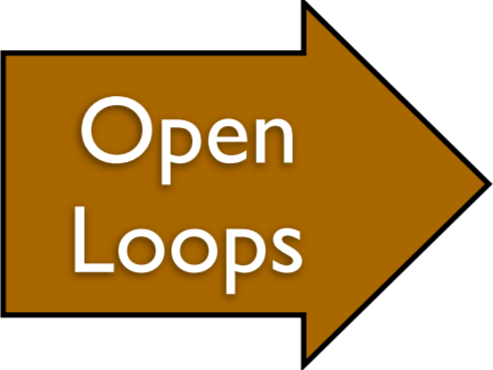


**“SOMETHING THAT HAS ENTERED YOUR LIFE  
THAT HAS AN UNCLEAR OUTCOME OR WHERE  
THE NEXT ACTION IS NOT DEFINED.”**

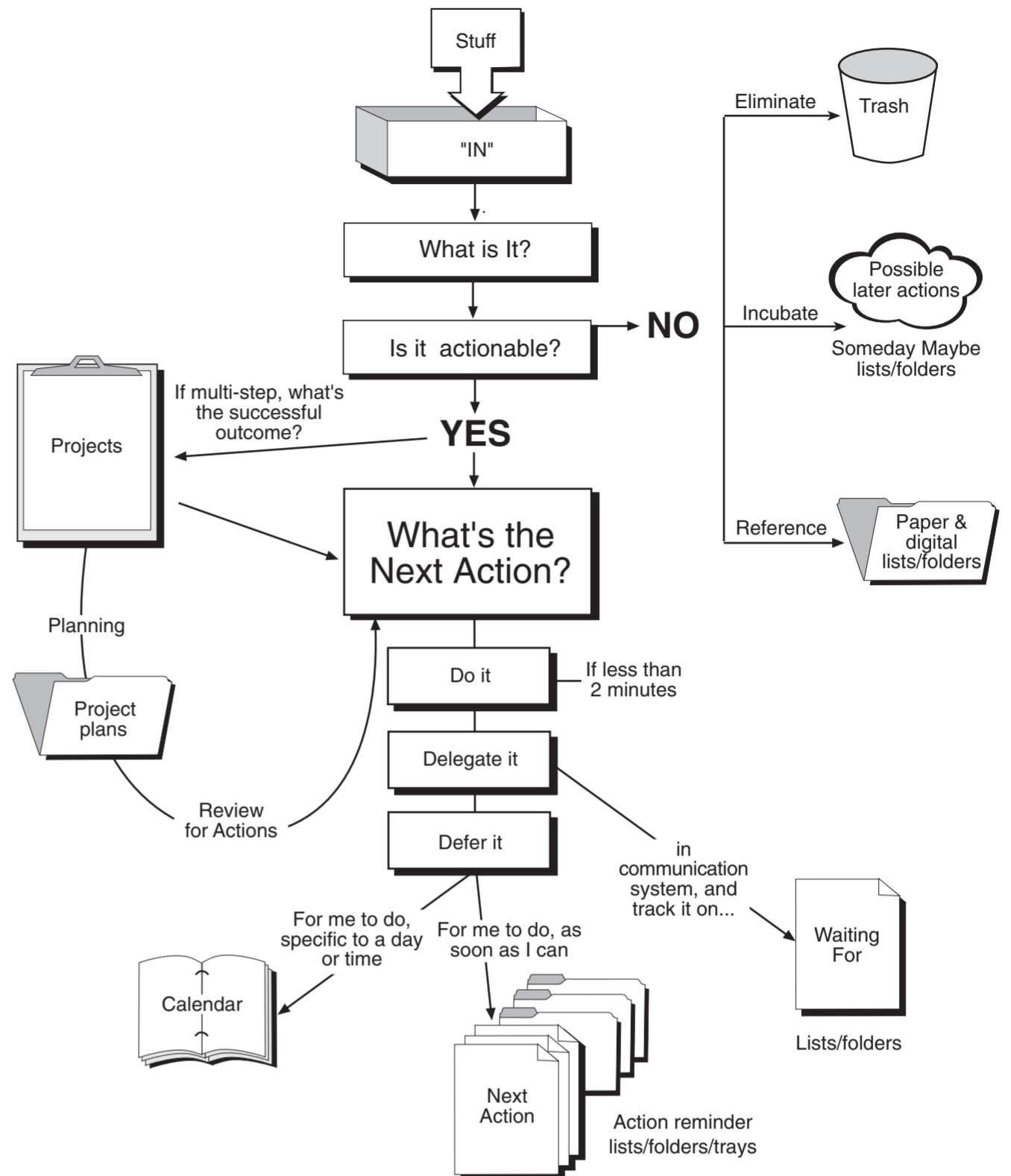
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David defines very early in the book what those open loops are.  
By defining them he already gives the solution to the problem!

Define an action!



- \* Capture all your “stuff”
- \* Is the **next action** associated to it?
- \* Is it a multi-step (project)?
  - \* YES: Define next 2 or 3 actions towards completion and keep track of it under **projects**
- \* Does it take less than 2 minutes? **DO IT**
  - \* Delegate it and keep track in your system
  - \* Defer it: fix date or next step/action to do as soon as I can



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Let's walk through this workflow.



1

Be ready to capture your inputs such as thoughts, discussions, etc **ANYTIME**. Simply write them down and process them later.

**Keep you r head clean!**

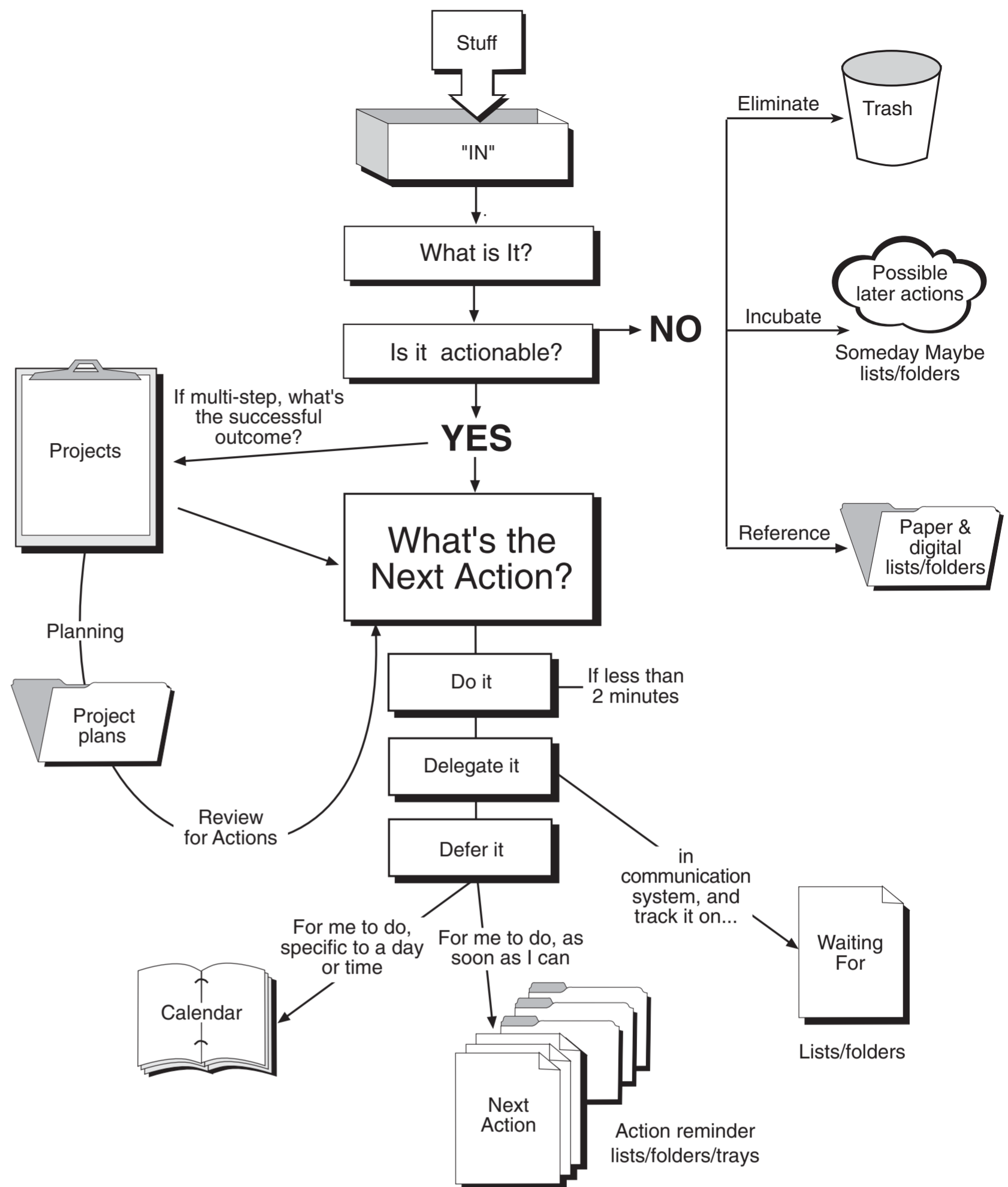
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A key component is to keep collecting action as they appear to free your mind **immediately**.

Here the goal is to take the thing out of your head, take out the anxiety that you might forget an important thing. You don't need to go through the workflow of defining an action every time you have an idea.

There will be times for "scheduled" brainstormings and to review the system.

- \* Capture all your “stuff”
- \* Is the **next action** associated to it?
- \* Is it a multi-step (project)?
  - \* YES: Define next 2 or 3 actions towards completion and keep track of it under **projects**
- \* Does it take less than 2 minutes? **DO IT**
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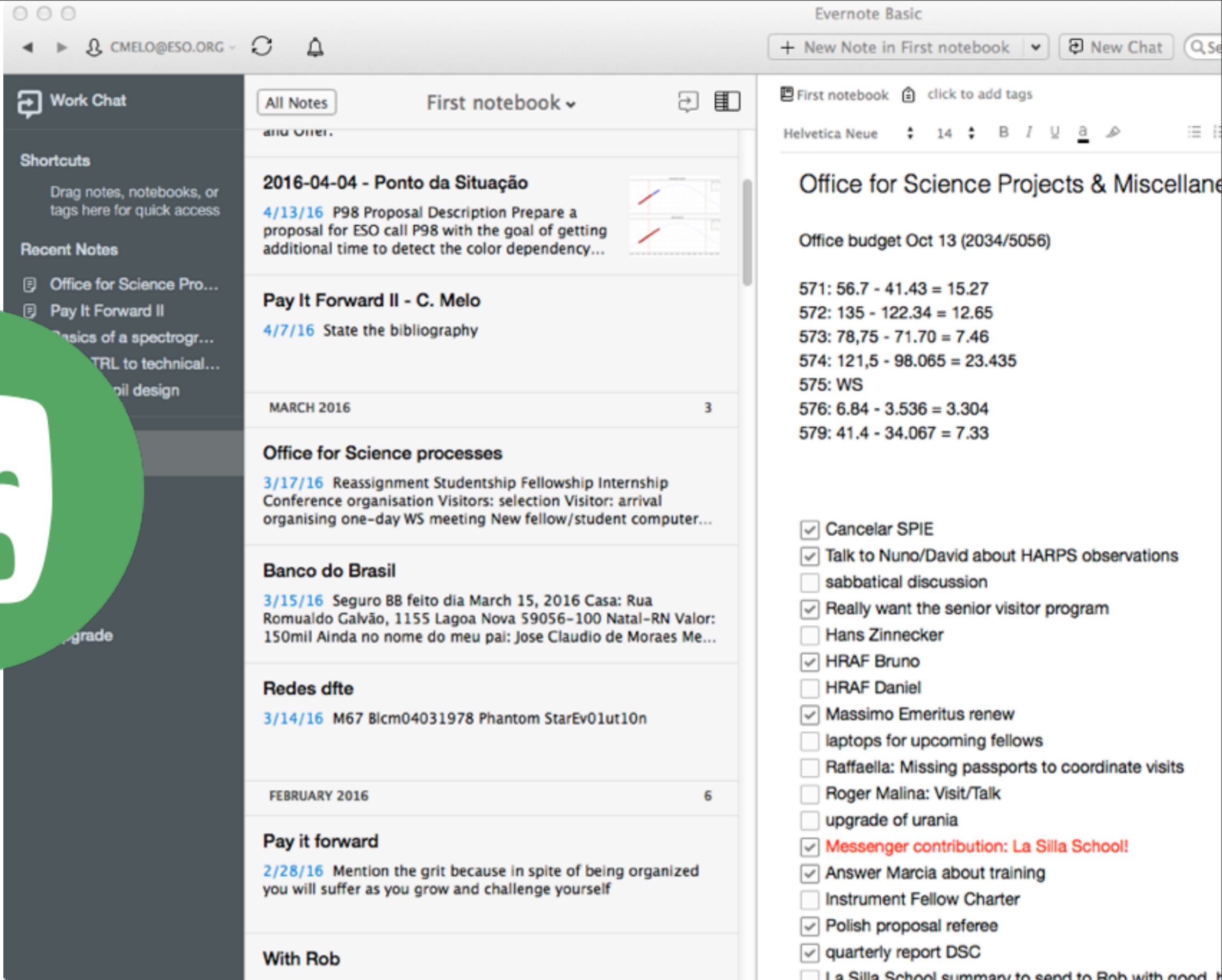


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Example of items no actionable:

spam (mail or e-mail) (trash), potentially interesting paper (maybe someday), reference (archive)

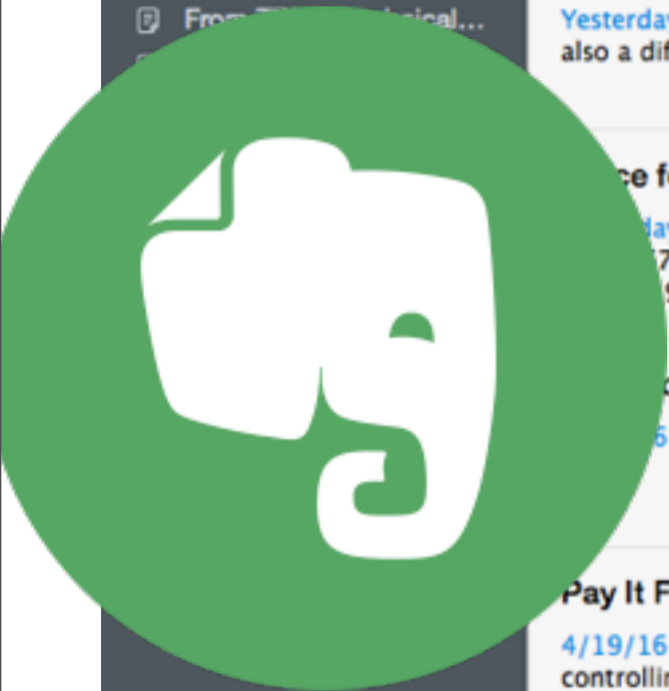
Actionable items (use verbs to define those actions):  
 Projects: open a “folder” define the next 2–3 actions  
 Single items: put it there simply



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For that I use Evernote (but this is not about the SW, you can use whatever you want). I like that because it is free and we synchronize across different devices.

I have a big note that collects many miscellaneous actions regarding the office for science and actions related to a a few open few projects



Work Chat

Shortcuts

Recent Notes

Office for Science pro...

oral session

From T...

All Notes

First notebook

APRIL 2016

Office for Science processes

Today Claudio: Reassignment Studentship Fellowship Internship Conference organisation Visitors: selection Visitor: arrival organi...

oral session

Yesterday origin of different elements the different star in iron has also a different gravity

Office for Science Projects & Miscellaneous Actions

Office budget Oct 13 (2034/5056) 571: 56.7 - 41.43 = ...

Pay Gastos Comunes

Babcock 53 Same year ussr

Pay It Forw...

4/19/16 Tim controlling w... (in contrast to

Power

4/15/16 acc Words Declar Offer:

2016-04-04

4/13/16 P98 proposal for additional tim

Evernote Basic

New Note in First notebook

New Chat

Search notes by keyword, date, place, an

First notebook

click to add tags

Helvetica Neue

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Office for Science processes

Claudio:

Reassignment

Studentship

Fellowship

Internship

Conference o

Visitors: selection

Visitor: arrival

organising one-day

Science Trip

Trip to interns

HRAF forms

Paulina:

New fellow/student

office allocation

Replacement of com

request of a simple f

Lunch to speakers/e

ia Eugenia:

page charges

conference registration fee

request a book/article

binding periodical

2

In simple projects it is enough to think about the next 2-3 steps.

Keep your head clean!

“Complicated” projects have their own note.

They could have a book on their own, with a note per phase for instance

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Then, for more “complicated projects” I have a dedicated note

Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	31	Apr 1	2
- Rose	12p Dr. Oscar Gonzalez - The futu	11 PUC with Matias Jones	SII apartamento 1a	4p Joint Extragalactic meetings: P
				5p Celebrating our achievements
5	6	7	8	9
Rob Ivson in Vitacura				
Pagar Karate	3:30p Dr. Pierre Kervella - The ne	2p AO interview Julien Girard	Quarterly Report	
AO interview		3:30p Prof Reinhard Genzel - E	Joint Extragalactic meetings: P	
+3 more		4:30p AO interview Bruno		
12	13	14		
20 Craighouse Gabriel	9 Meeting with Rob	Abertura bolsa de produtividade		
p Dimitri on Student's topics	3:30p ALMA colloquium : Jeff Wag	11 PIF II - Oscar		
		12p Dr Santiago Erroz - The MUS		
		+2 more		
19	20	21		
10 DSC Meeting	Deadline to send review to Natic	9 Joint Comittee		
11 Meeting Nuno + Pedro	Pay Gastos Comunes			
12p Dr Sonia Duffau - RR Lyrae st	10 HRAF talk wiht Daniel			
	+2 more			
26	27	28		
Pay Forward II (No talks TBC)	11 Claudio Melo and Henri Boffin -	12p Dan Asmus - The predomina		
11 Willem-Jan de Wit - Owing it to				
			4p Joint Extragalactic meetings: P	



Only actions with a deadline or happening at a given time enter your calendar

**Calendar is a hole ground!  
Keep it clean!**

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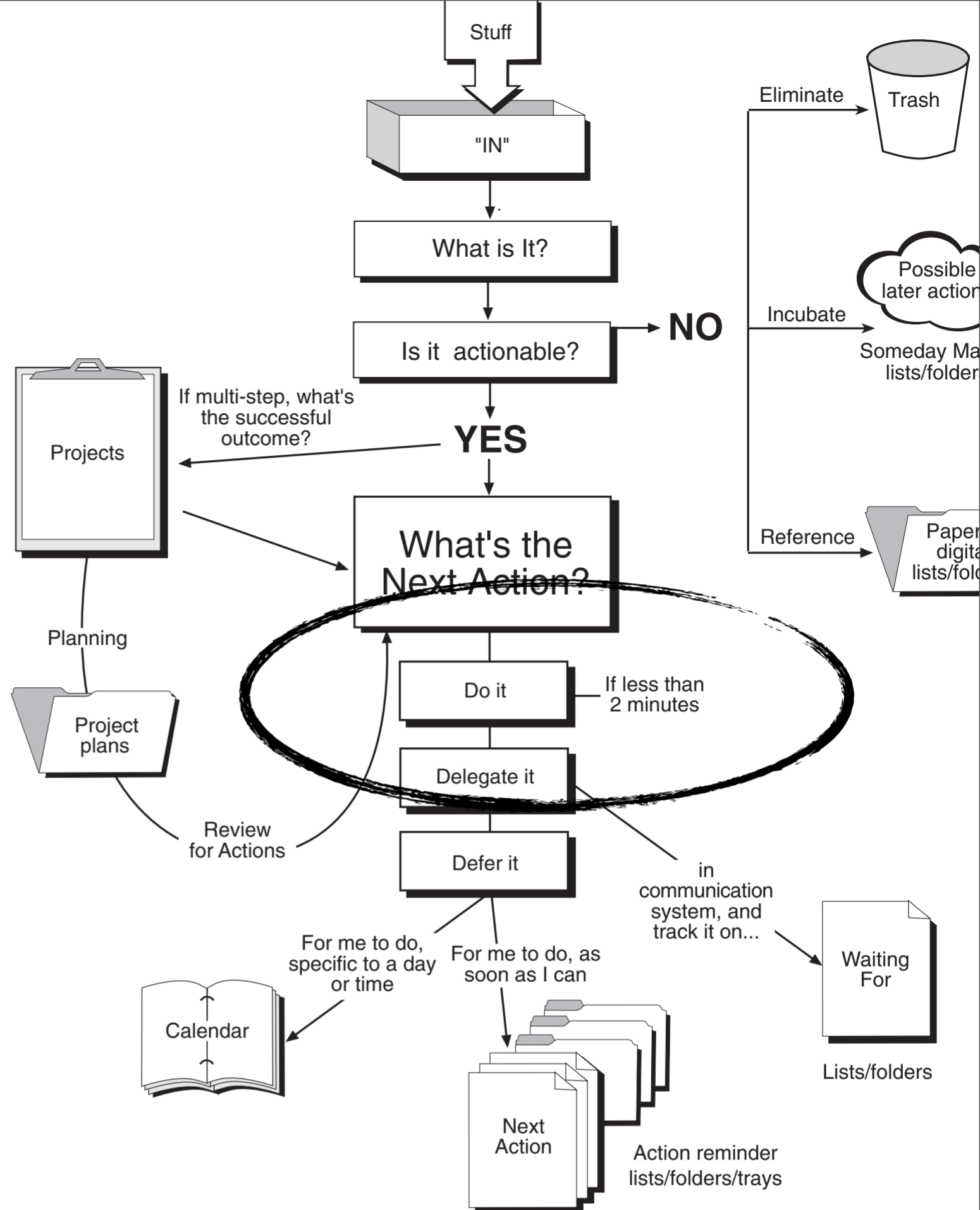
David also stresses quite strongly the use of the calendar. It seems obvious but many of us use a calendar as block note, to record future actions that indeed can take place at anytime.

This is a wrong use of a calendar. It should be restricted to deadlines or actions that have to happen at a given point.

4

Small action are not worth the overhead of entering in the system.

**If an action takes less than 2 minutes, just do it!**



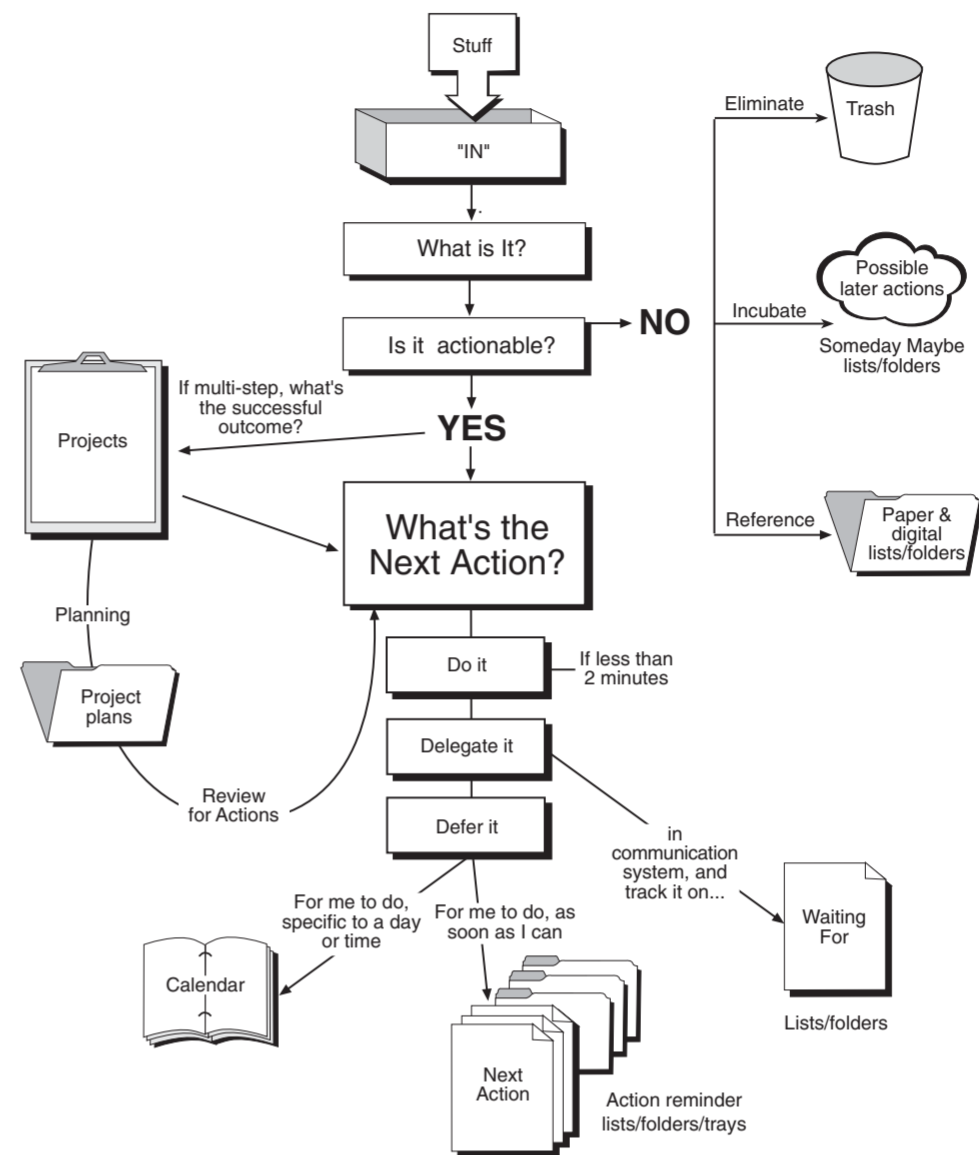
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The 2 minutes limit is just a suggestion. It can be more, typically I think I use 5min. But the point is clear if there is something that can be done very, very quickly do it and take it out of your head!

5

Go through this process every week (for instance last thing before the weekend)

**Keep the system update at all costs**



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Review your projects and pending actions periodically (again he suggests every friday before the weekend, to start the weekend with your mind free!). At the moment you are reviewing your projects and next actions you will realize that many of them became obsolete.

As I said new ideas will pop-up all the time, keep collecting them. At the moment of the weekly review, you have a chance to go through them and enter them in your system.

Also process that stuff that comes into paper or your notes you took on paper (get rare those days).

**Keep the system update  
at all costs**

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**I can't emphasize this enough.** If you lost track of that, your CPU will have the tendency to start checking whether your system is really up-to-date. You feel it in your stomach!!!

If it happens, no panic. Block a few hours/a day and go through it, until you relax again.

But what is the kind “stuff” that I should allow to enter in my life?

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By implementing GTD you will find that the size of the rock will decrease or becoming manageable.

But what we really want is to get rid of the rock. Is it possible?

Do you want to know who you are?  
Don't ask. **Act!** Action will  
delineate and define you.

In Zen, actions speak louder  
than words. Doing is more  
important than knowing, and  
knowledge which cannot be  
translated into action is of  
little worth.

Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about  
creating yourself.

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Action seems to be a key element to a happy life

*Thomas  
Jefferson*

*Former US  
President*

Do you want to know who you are?  
Don't ask. **Act!** Action will  
delineate and define you.

*Thich Thien-An*

*Zen Monk*

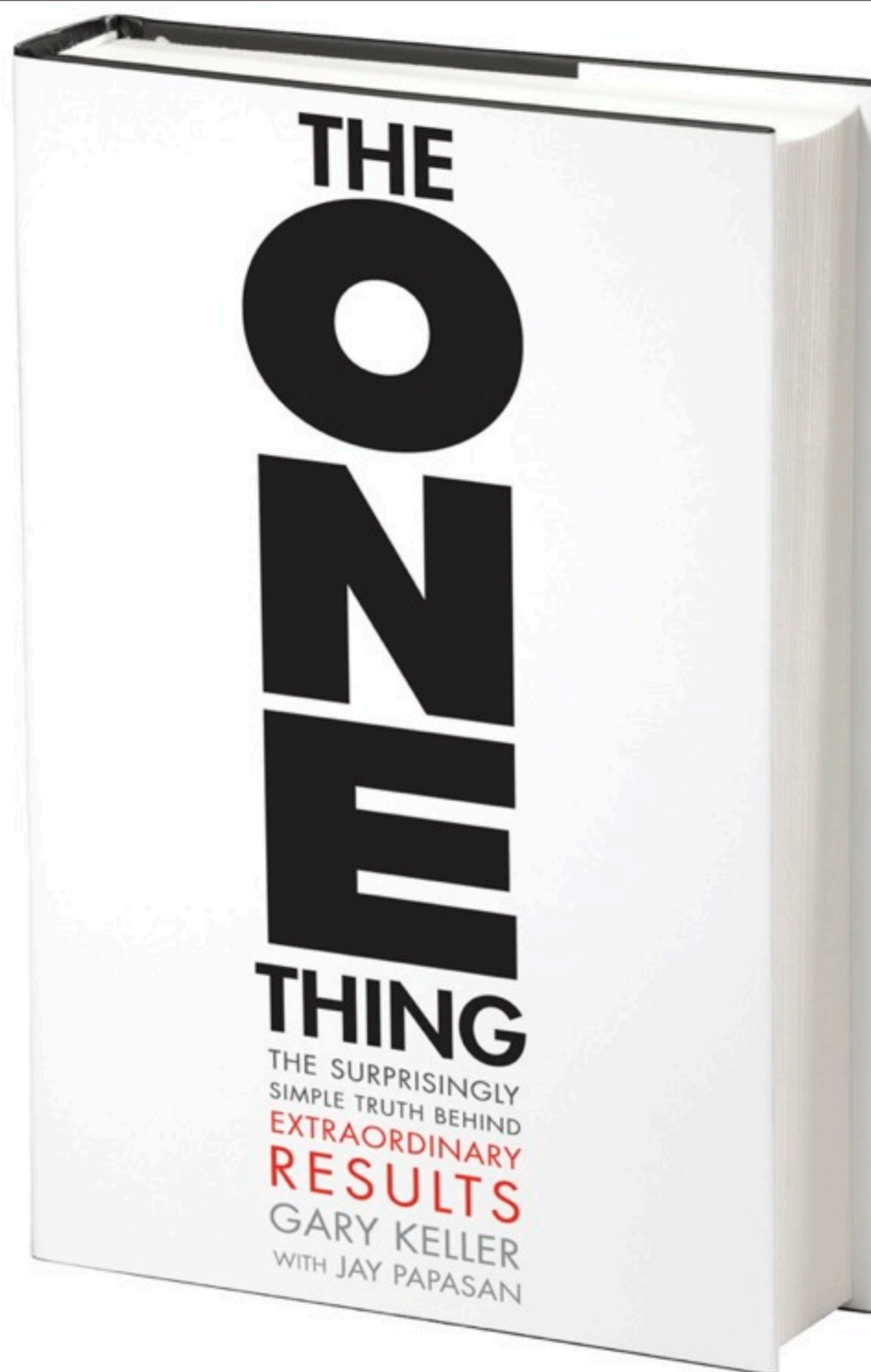
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*Bernard Shaw  
Irish writer*

Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about  
creating yourself.

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Action seems to be a key element to a happy life



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This brings me to the second book – called the ONE thing.

# The ONE Thing



*Gary Keller*

**“What’s the ONE Thing you can do such that by doing it everything else will be easier or unnecessary?”**

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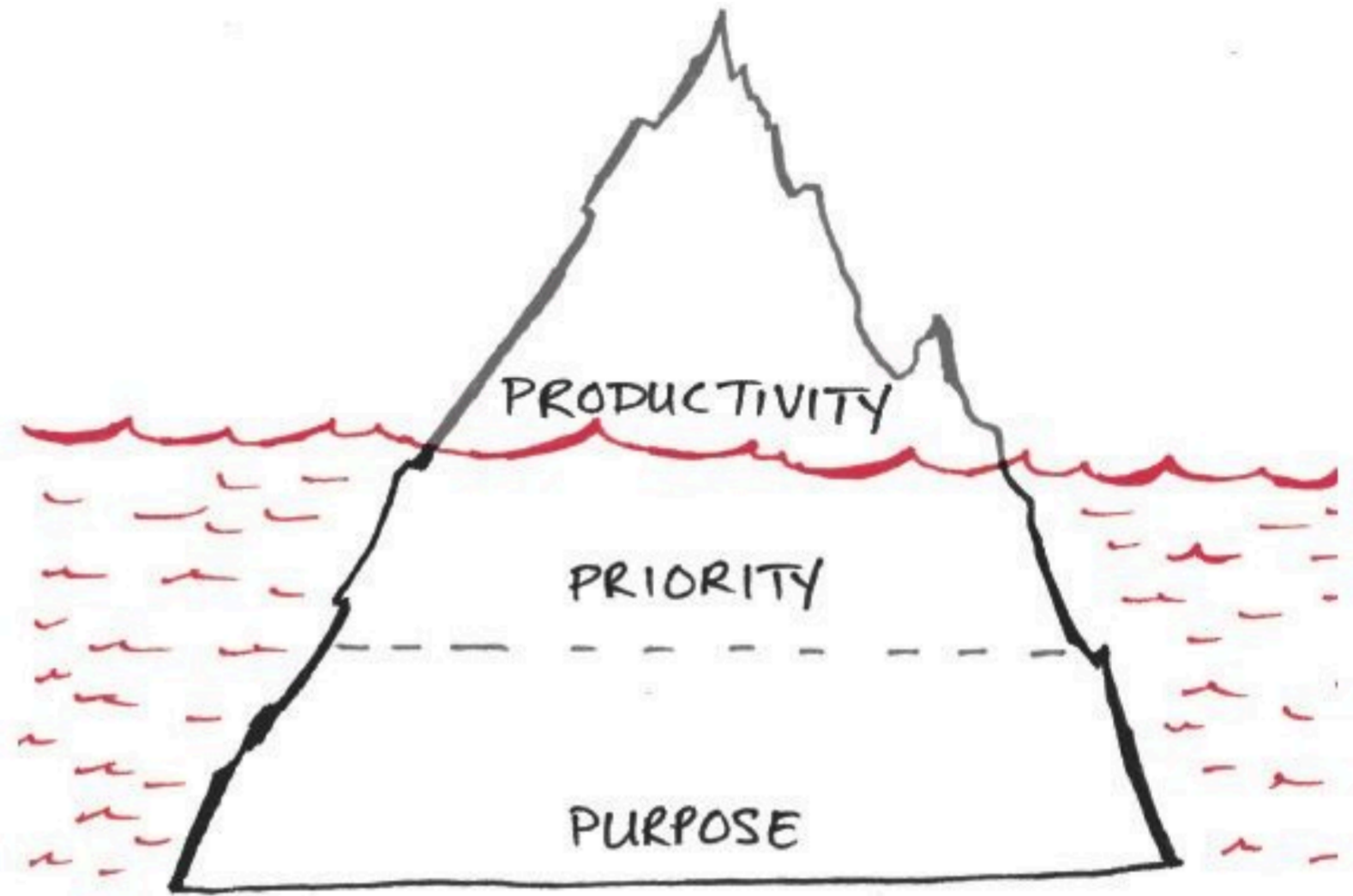
This book written by a real state champ(!) gravitates around this question.

As you can guess, it deals with prioritization of your “stuff”. A matter which is indeed a difficult one.

1

The more productive people are, the more purpose and priority are pushing and driving them.

### Living by Priority



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The point is even if you apply the GTD au pie de la lettre, you for sure will get your stuff under control and a relaxed mind, **BUT** does the stuff in your system has a meaning to you? Or working on them everyday makes you feel like Sisyphus?

Find your purpose, your personal mission and then transforming that into actions is a difficulty but yet very rewarding path to walk.

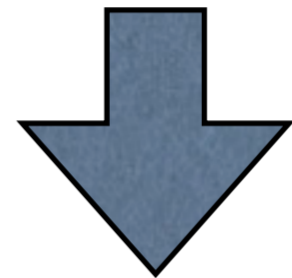
2

- Follow the Path of Mastery
- Move from “E” to “P”
- Live the Accountability Cycle

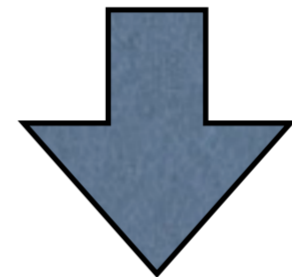
### The 3 Commitments



in  
10 years



1000 hr/yr



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### Why priority matters?

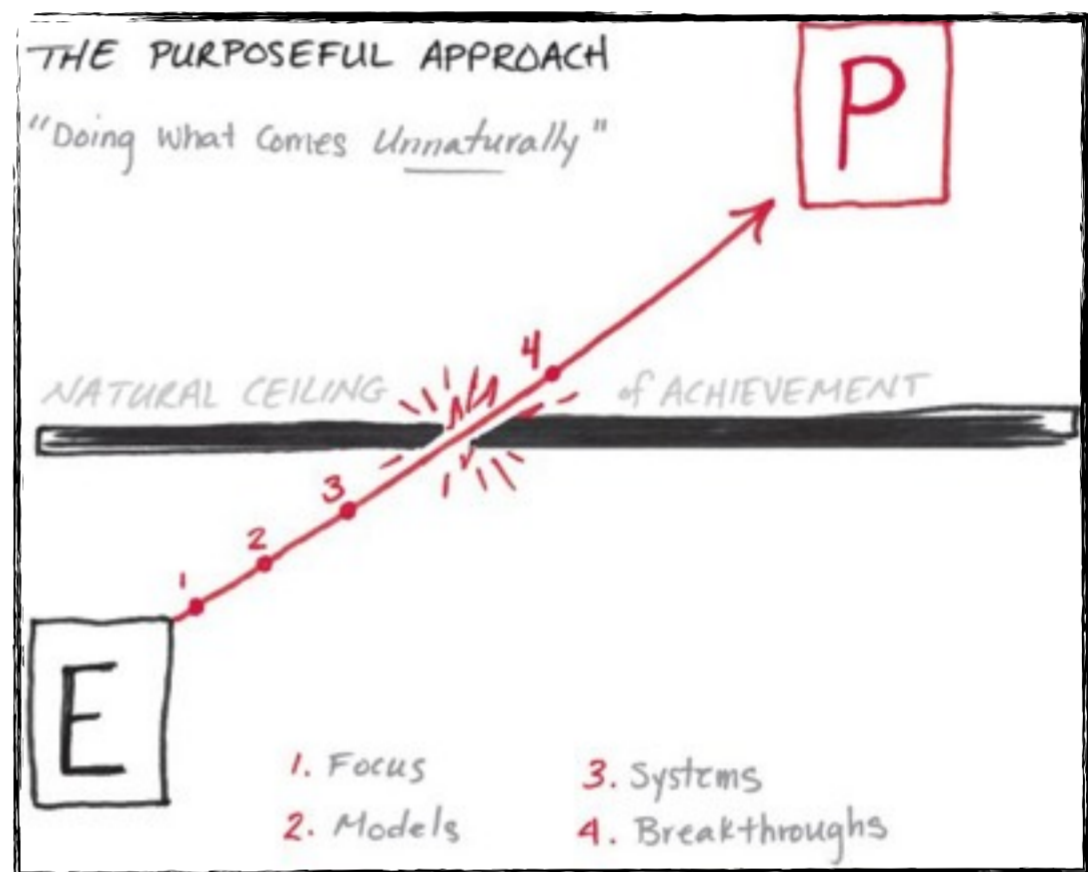
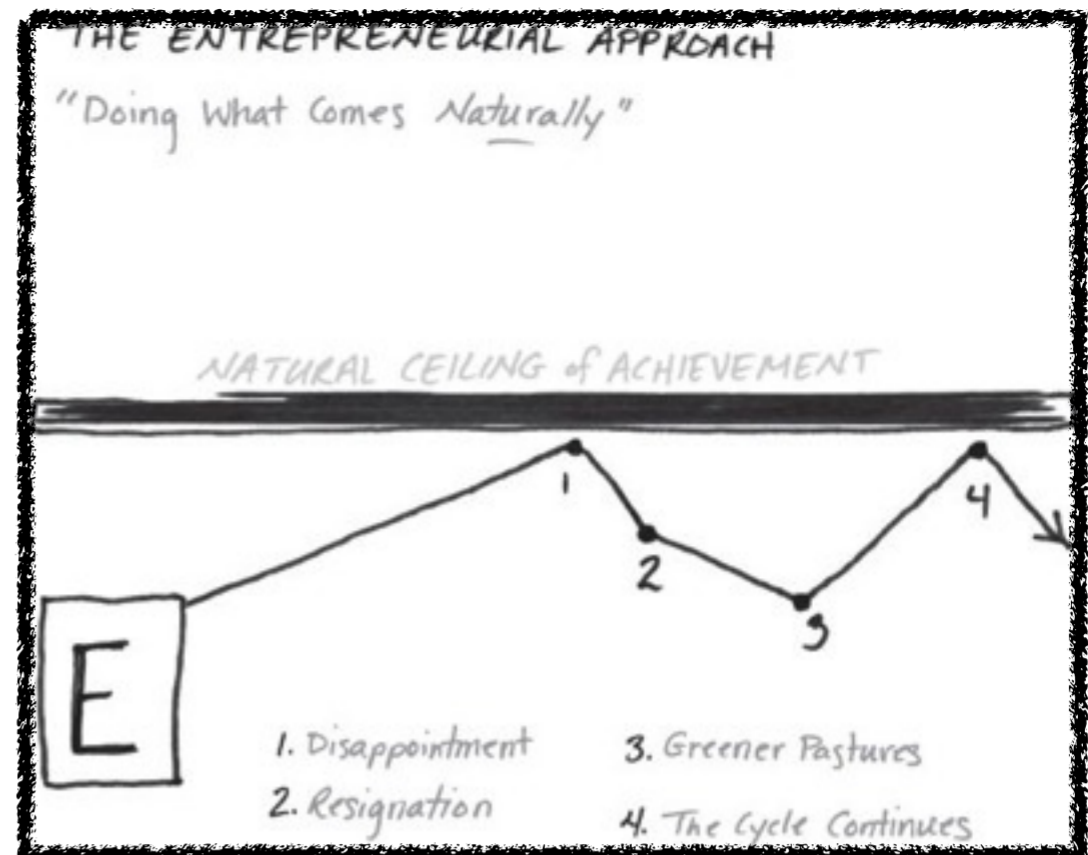
Many elite performers complete their journey in about ten years, which, if you do the math, is an average of about three hours of deliberate practice a day, every day, 365 days a year. Now, if your ONE Thing relates to work and you put in 250 workdays a year (five days a week for 50 weeks), to keep pace on your mastery journey you'll need to average four hours a day.

This is not carved into stone, 4hr/days means that: you have to open up a considerable amount of time and work on that in a consistent way to build your expertise to fulfill your purpose.

2

- Follow the Path of Mastery
- Move from “E” to “P”
- Live the Accountability Cycle

### The 3 Commitments



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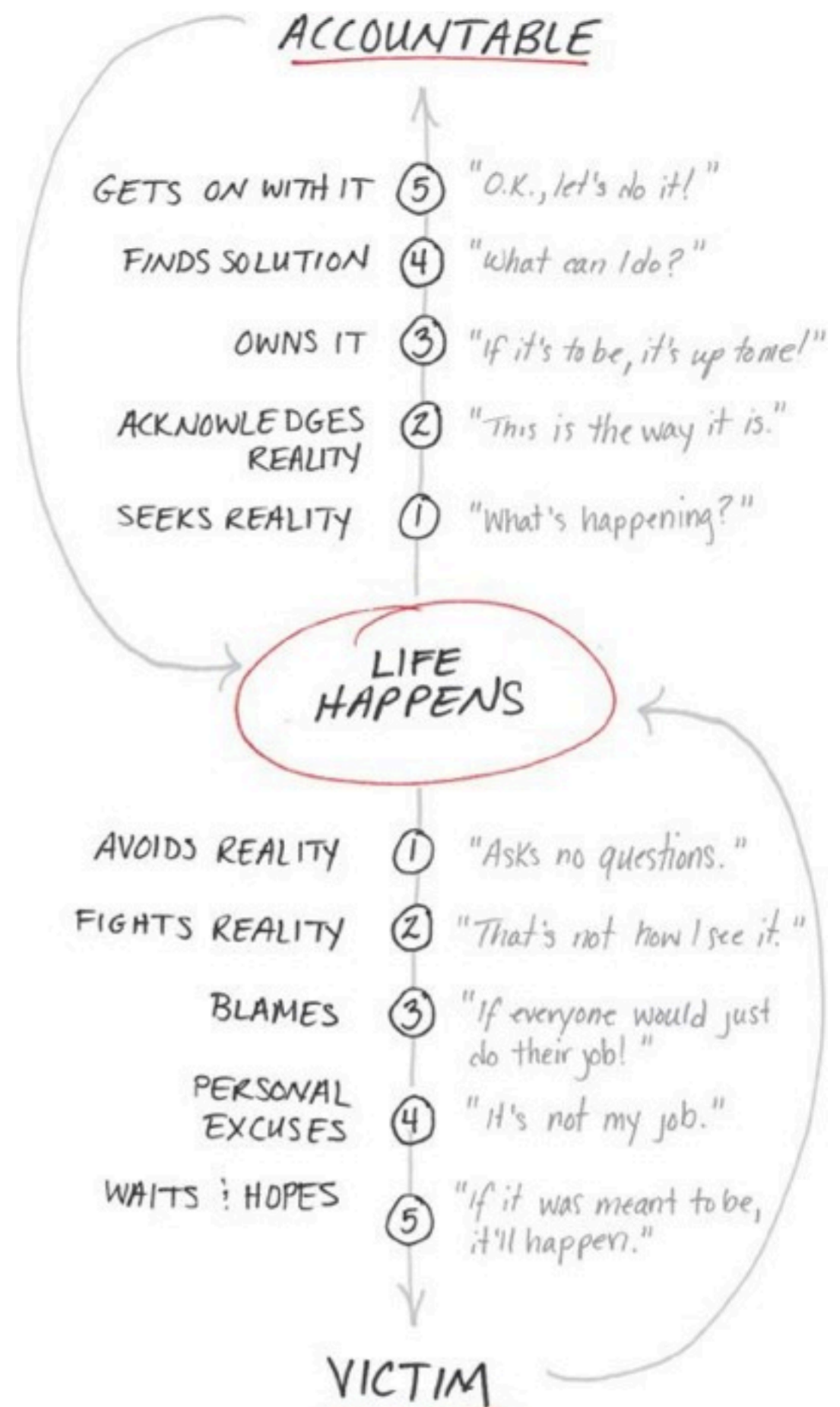
The top case, you follow what comes to you naturally, you can achieve very good results in those areas, projects, etc. which is already very good. But even if this is the case, you are not in control. “Life” is telling you what to do.

Now although we will never 100% of control, we can still steer the ship towards a meaningful direction (to you) and create a different “destiny”, that’s is a breakthrough. This means to have and cultivate this mentality (the Purposeful approach)

2

- Follow the Path of Mastery
- Move from “E” to “P”
- Live the Accountability Cycle

### The 3 Commitments



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To succeed you have to take responsibility of your own life, including thoughts, words, actions (personal leadership). Don't victimize yourself by blaming others.

Remember **Action** is the key to become something – The ONE things talks about coherent action towards a goal, a purpose.

3

- Start saying **NO**
- Accept chaos
- Manage your energy
- Take ownership of your environment

### **The 4 Productivity Thieves**

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**Start saying “no”:** It’s not possible to please everyone. Say “yes” to your ONE Thing (and consider requests related to that priority). Say “no” to everything else.

**Accept chaos:** When you focus on your ONE Thing, other stuff will inevitably pile up. Don’t fight the mess or chaos. Trust that commitment to your main priority will, over time, yield the results that will prove you made the right decisions.

**Manage your energy:** Good personal energy management is foundational to productivity. This includes spiritual, physical, emotional, mental and business energies. The secret is to spend the early hours of your day energizing yourself, so you have what you need for the day.

**Take ownership of your environment.** Your environment includes who you see (people) and what you experience (place). Make sure these are aligned with and support your ONE Thing.