

CHRIS SWENSON'S MASTER NOTES

Practice Success in Less Time and with Less Money

GETTING THINGS DONE

The Art of Stress-Free Productivity

Getting Things Done
the art of stress-free
productivity
from the New York Times bestselling author
David Allen

An all-new
updated
edition



BY DAVID ALLEN PENGUIN BOOKS, REVISED ED. © 2015 352 PAGES

"Welcome to a gold mine of insights into strategies for how to have more energy, be more relaxed, and get a lot more accomplished with much less effort. If you're like me, you like getting things done and doing them well, and yet you also want to savor life in ways that seem increasingly elusive if not downright impossible if you're working too hard. This doesn't have to be an either-or proposition. It is possible to be effectively doing while you are delightfully being, in your ordinary workaday world." - David Allen from *GETTING THINGS DONE*

BOOK DESCRIPTION (from Amazon)

The book Lifehack calls "The Bible of business and personal productivity."

"A completely revised and updated edition of the blockbuster bestseller from 'the personal productivity guru'"—Fast Company

Since it was first published almost fifteen 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.

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NOTE INTRODUCTION

Many of us go into private practice to have more freedom and to be able to spend more time with our families. However, all too often we are consumed with a great deal of tasks, overwhelmed, tired, fatigued, and burnt out!

If we just had a way where we could work less and still get a great deal done. A system where we can consistently get the job done while we are also getting the job done with living our life with joy, freedom, and happiness!

Well, let me introduce you to the book, "Getting Things Done" by David Allen! Quite the exceptional book, in fact referred to as "the bible of business and personal productivity!"

The book is filled with great takeaways! Many of which I have applied and definitely felt the difference. This note contains a few of those great ideas but, I would recommend you spending some time reading this whole book!

Get your copy of the book here: [GETTING THINGS DONE!](#)

Let's dive right in and discuss some great takeaways from this excellent book!

OVERWHELMED AND STILL PRODUCTIVELY FUNCTIONING

"It's 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. That's a great way to live and work, at elevated levels of effectiveness and efficiency. It's also becoming a critical operational style required of successful and high-performing professionals. You already know how to do everything necessary to achieve this high-performance state. If you're like most people, however, you need to apply these skills in a more timely, complete, and systematic way so you can get on top of it all instead of feeling buried." - David Allen from *GETTING THINGS DONE*

Is this possible?

To be overwhelmed with all the things to do as a practice owner and still be able to function productively with a clear head. And not only that...with relaxed control!

Allen shares his tremendous methodology (Getting Things Done system) throughout the book in detail. I highly recommend you check it out as it becomes too much to highlight in this simple Master Note.

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I can tell you that it is possible! Let's continue with some of the other big takeaways to help you understand how! At least for now, believe it's possible!

GTD'S 2 KEY OBJECTIVES

"The methods I present here are all based on two key objectives: (1) capturing all the things that need to get done—now, later, someday, big, little, or in between—into a logical and trusted system outside your head and off your mind; and (2) disciplining yourself to make front-end decisions about all of the "inputs" you let into your life so that you will always have a plan for "next actions" that you can implement or renegotiate at any moment." - David Allen from *GETTING THINGS DONE*

Allen's Getting Things Done (GTD) system is broken down into two key objectives. Consistently meet those objectives and you are well on your way to being productive even when overwhelmed. Or, perhaps the overwhelm is better managed.

Objective one: Capture ALL things that need to get done into a trusted system.

As practice owners we consistently have multiple projects flying around our heads at any time. Plus, we can be easily distracted with the internet, email, and our phones.

With all this flying around in our heads how in the heck do we suppose to remember it all! Well, in our heads we don't. With a trusted system of recording everything we can then free up some processing space in our heads and focus on the task at hand. When we need to head back to another task, we consult our system.

Your objective: Develop your system today and begin to record everything! FYI...There are a number of great task management systems and apps available for us practice owners to utilize!!!

Objective two: Develop discipline.

Discipline is incredibly valuable for all us practice owners. Without it, we endlessly run circles around everything and it seems we are going nowhere.

Another great book on the topic of discipline is "Discipline Equals Freedom" by Jocko Willink. Jocko lays out how being disciplined in our lives and businesses is the key to true freedom.

The discipline Allen is talking about here is regarding what tasks to complete next. You finally have it all recorded, then what?

Here is a great quote from the book that explains just this answer: *"What's the next action? This is the critical question for everything you've collected; if you answer it appropriately, you'll have the key substantive*

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thing to organize. The “next action” is the next physical, visible activity that needs to be engaged in, in order to move the current reality toward completion.”

Spend some time really processing that quote! Work to develop your discipline muscles! Which is something we do in my Private Practice Warrior program.

MIND LIKE WATER

“In karate there is an image that’s used to define the position of perfect readiness: “mind like water.” Imagine throwing a pebble into a still pond. How does the water respond? The answer is, totally and appropriately to the force and mass of the input, then it returns to calm. It doesn’t overreact or underreact. Clearing the mind and being flexible are key.” - David Allen from *GETTING THINGS DONE*

This takeaway contains a tremendous lesson for us practice owners...At least I know it did for me, lol! Take some time to really process this one as well. It is a bit philosophical but dang, us practice owners had to learn some really deep stuff in grad school! I think you can do it!

The water is our mind. The stone is a task or circumstance. If our minds are clear, we then react to the task or circumstance appropriately and with great flexibility as we return to clear mind.

However, if our minds are cluttered with multiple inputs, then the task itself will result in an over or under reaction! We are then out of balance and placing great demands on our flexibility at that time.

Clearly, with a great system coupled with discipline can help calm our internal mind waters!

Engaging in Box Breathing method introduced by Mark Divine through his SealFit training can be quite useful here. Inhale to count of 4, then hold for 4, exhale for 4, and finally hold for 4. Then repeat the process for at least a few minutes and you will feel the difference.

If the pebble was quite large and you feel very anxious, then utilize Mark’s other method of inhaling to count of 3, then stating a powerful mantra (“I got this”), then exhale for 3. Then repeat until you feel under control!

TWO MINUTES

“If an action will take less than two minutes, it should be done at the moment it is defined.” - David Allen from *GETTING THINGS DONE*

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This particular takeaway has become a life saver for me. I was the king of letting these small tiny tasks build up into a mountain of work.

I know as therapists and practice owners we can become quite tired and it's so easy to procrastinate even the smallest of task. That quick email you could respond to, a note that may need to be entered, looking through the mail...the list can go on and on.

However, if the task will be completed in less than two minutes, then get it done, NOW!

It's just that simple. Seek to utilize this rule in your life and see how much your productivity soars!

EMAIL UNDER CONTROL

"It requires much less energy to maintain e-mail at a zero base than at a thousand base." - David Allen from *GETTING THINGS DONE*

As practice owners, our inboxes can be so filled with thousands of emails. I know mine has been for quite some time. I am not perfect by any means as I too try to get my inbox to zero.

David makes sense here when he discussed how much energy it takes to maintain a zero inbox versus a thousand emails.

It reminds me of when I work with adolescents that don't do their homework. I continue to remind them of how much more energy it takes to catch up!

Take a look at your email inbox, develop a system to organize those emails, or hire a virtual assistant to help you with your emails! Oh, and don't forget the two minute rule, lol!

CLEAN UP, CLOSE UP, AND CLARIFY

"Most people feel best about their work the week before their vacation, but it's not because of the vacation itself. What do you do the last week before your leave on a big trip? You clean up, close up, clarify, and renegotiate all your agreements with yourself and others. I just suggest that you do that weekly instead of yearly." - David Allen from *GETTING THINGS DONE*

As a fellow practice owner I can truly relate to David's point here. How often before we leave on that trip do we ensure that everything is tidy, everyone knows what to do, who is covering what, etc...

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The point is not to wait until you are going on vacation to do this. Rather, build this process in weekly. Every Friday, I conduct a planning session with myself as I wrap up the week, plan for the upcoming week, and then head out and enjoy my weekend.

Monday comes round and I revisit my plan and then execute!

Other authors suggest doing a rapid clean up, debrief, and planning each day. I don't necessarily do that every day as I am human like the rest of us. However, when I do, I am much more focused, productive, and not easily distracted.

Give it a try and see how it goes!

TRY THE GTD PROCESS NOW

"You can try it for yourself right now if you like. Choose one project that is new or stuck or that could simply use some improvement. Think of your purpose. Think of what a successful outcome would look like: where would you be physically, financially, in terms of reputation, or whatever? Brainstorm potential steps. Organize your ideas. Decide on next actions. Are you any clearer about where you want to go and how to get there?" - David Allen from GETTING THINGS DONE

Step 1: Choose a project.

My Project is...

Step 2: What is your purpose with this project?

My purpose with this project is...

Step 3: What would a successful outcome look like? Physically, financially, reputation, etc..

A successful outcome would like...

Step 4: What are some potential steps?

Some potential steps are...

Step 5: Organize your steps according to which makes the best sense.

The next steps that make the best sense are...

Step 6: Decide on your next actions.

The next action I am going to make is...

Just before you take action! And continue to take action! If what isn't working than reevaluate your potential next steps!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF "Getting Things Done"

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DAVID ALLEN

David Allen is president of David Allen & Co. and has more than twenty years' experience as a management consultant, executive coach, and educator. He has been a keynote speaker and productivity facilitator for organizations such as Oracle, L. L. Bean, Microsoft, Lockheed, and the World Bank. His work has been featured in Fast Company, Fortune, and many other publications. Learn more about David at www.gettingthingsdone.com.

ABOUT AUTHOR OF THIS MASTER NOTE



CHRIS SWENSON

Chris Swenson is a true [Private Practice Warrior](http://imchrisswenson.com) who believes that therapists in private practice are in the best position to truly make a difference in the mental health concerns of our world. He loves helping people succeed in private practice as he studies, embodies, and teaches the fundamentals of mastering private practice. Learn more about Chris at <http://imchrisswenson.com>