

A free, electronic newsletter brought to you by:

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Getting Things Done -- A Review

"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 the opening of ***Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity*** by personal productivity guru David Allen. Pretty enticing, isn't it?

This is a time management book with a twist. Allen's main premise is that we all have more to do than we can possibly get done. His coaching and consulting experience have shown him that we need to address this issue from both a high-level -- "purposes, values, vision" kind of thinking, and the mundane -- getting organized about all of the details of the work to be done.

The major organizing principles are:

- identifying all the projects you are or want to be working on
- recording everything that is in your head (and nagging you at inappropriate moments)
- determining the next action for each project

"Project" is not narrowly defined. A project might be "spend more quality time with my daughter" or "get my new business going" or subsets of those.

The steps involved for stress-free productivity are:

- **Collection** – This is gathering all stuff, physical things and ideas, into one inbox
- **Processing** – Here you review each item in the inbox deciding what it is, what it means, and what you're going to do with it. This includes completing any less-than-two-minute actions, handing off those things that can be delegated, discarding what you don't need, and sorting the rest into your own organizing system.
- **Organizing** – This is the key to freeing your mind from worrying about all the things that need to be done. The details of your system will evolve over time. The basics are: maintaining organized project lists with the next action identified for each project; creating Next Actions, Waiting For, and Someday/Maybe lists; putting appointments, date specific information and actions on your calendar; and developing

a storage system for support and reference materials.

- **Reviewing** – To ensure that “you’re doing what you need to be doing and that it’s OK to be not doing what you’re not doing,” you must review your system on a regular basis (some things daily, and all at least weekly) and keep it current.
- **Doing** – Now that you’ve freed your thinking from worry, you follow your intuition and your Next Action list and select the best activity for each moment.

Another key concept is eliminating the Daily ToDo List, especially for those who are in a constantly shifting environment. This helps you to avoid spending a lot of time lamenting all the things that are still on the ToDo list at the end of the day. Not to mention the time it takes to find new locations for all those left over items. This book offers a systematic way to make sure that the essential and high-priority actions get done!

See David Allen’s free newsletter, sample checklists, tools and examples at www.davidco.com. For help in implementing these ideas, consider joining our virtual book discussion beginning March 6 (see details below). We’ll read a section of the book each week and apply the relevant techniques to our own lives.

Personal Update

This has been a month of creative expression: furniture rearrangement (thank you, Arline), piano lessons (my last was at age seventeen), and an all-day workshop where I made a mosaic-topped table of which I’m quite proud. I also continued learning how to apply brain research to every day life and work (Thinking for Results seminar led by John Stoker).

My friend Joanne visited and we explored the town of Jerome, at a steep 5,000+ feet. The population of this copper mining town fell from 15,000 in its heyday to under 100 when the mine closed in the 1950s. It was later discovered by the hippies, who bought up houses for back taxes and it evolved into a terrific artists' community. Today it has a population of about 500 and many shops and galleries filled with local art as well as the standard AZ tourist trinkets. See www.jeromechamber.com if you’d like more information.

We also visited Taliesin West, the winter camp of Frank Lloyd Wright and his apprentices from 1937-1959. It is still a functioning architectural school and many of the rooms continue to be furnished as they were in Wright’s day. We had a terrific tour guide and it is definitely worth a return visit.

Business is picking up, the weather is terrific and there are lots of things to see and experience!

Coming Events

***Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity* Book Discussion**

Dates: Mondays March 6, 13, 20 & 27

Time: 7-8 pm AZ Time/MT, 6-7 pm PT, 9-10 pm ET

Group Size: 8-10 people

Fee: \$75 (Book available from amazon.com for @ \$10); Early bird price: \$50 if registered by 2/7

The book, *Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity*, by David Allen, provides a methodology that will help you to free your mind from remembering and

worrying about the stuff of life.

The major organizing principles are:

- identifying all the projects you are or want to be working on
- recording everything that is in your head (and nagging you at inappropriate moments)
- identifying the next action for each project
- reviewing the projects on a weekly basis to re-prioritize and set next actions

Join us and begin to gradually apply these principles to your life and work. We'll divide the book into four sections and implement a different part of the process each week.

***Outsmart Your Brain: How to Make Success Look Easy* Book Discussion**

Dates: Wednesdays April 5, 12, and 19

Time: 4-5 pm AZ Time/PDT, 7-8 pm EDT

Group Size: 8-10 people

Fee: \$60; early bird price \$50 if registered by 3/15

(Book available from amazon.com for @ \$10)

Outsmart your Brain: How to Make Success Look Easy, by Marcia Reynolds, is a compact book, rich with exercises, examples and guidelines. It teaches how your brain works and how to recognize, understand and shift your emotional states. Learn to tap into your hidden mental powers, make better decisions and influence those around you to create the results you desire.

Many of my clients come to me because they want to increase their satisfaction with their work – they want to transition to a different career, their job has ended and they need to find new work, they want to start their own business, they want their current business to stop running their entire lives or they may be in a life transition that has them thinking about what's next (i.e., the kids have grown, they want to partially retire, etc).

If you are ready to make changes in your business and personal life or know someone who is, I'm looking for you. I work primarily with people in career transition and with self-directed individuals and business owners who want to maximize their effectiveness and satisfaction at work while maintaining a healthy life/work balance. Curious? Email me at DEXner@ExnerAssociates.com or call 602-298-1129 to schedule a complimentary 45-minute coaching session.

If you are enjoying this newsletter, please forward it to your friends and colleagues! Or direct them to the subscription form and past issues at www.exnerassociates.com

Thanks,

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The gods have two ways of dealing harshly with us. The first is to deny us our dreams and the second is to grant them.
— Oscar Wilde

