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RAM DUMP



If you want to move from feeling overwhelmed to feeling at peace and in control, here's a tool to help you get started. It's called a **RAM Dump**. RAM is the memory in a computer—in this case, your brain--that holds onto all those “sticky notes” or “incompletions” in your life. **An incomplection is anything you pay attention or give thought to that needs to be different than it is right now.**

Here are some examples of types of incompletions:

- Things you intend to do but have not started.
- Things you have started but have not completed.
- Things you have completed but have not acknowledged that it's complete/good enough.
- Agreements/promises you've made but have not kept.

Begin the Download

Using the list of trigger questions on the following pages to get you started, write down things you're storing in your memory that need your attention. This is not intended to become a “to-do” list, but rather a complete “download” of what your brain is holding on to at the conscious and subconscious level. **Download all the sticky notes on your brain by writing each one on a 3x5 index card—one item per card.** These sticky notes show up in the form of *incompletions*, *tolerations*, *irritations*, as well as physical, mental, spiritual and social *messes* in your life.

As you do the brain dump, don't try to prioritize or decide whether or not you will do these things. After you've completed the “download” you can decide what to do with each item on all the 3x5 cards. For now, don't think about that...just identify all the sticky notes!

Go through this list of trigger questions TWICE - once for your WORK activities and once for your PERSONAL activities. Write EVERYTHING down that comes to mind, as a 100% download is important to experience ultimate peace-of-mind.

After you've gone through the entire list of trigger questions, review the action items needing your attention and write down the **next action you will take** and **when you will do it**.

If any of the items are part of a bigger project, identify all the steps needed to complete the whole task and when you will attend to each step.

Squeaky bedroom door

Action: Spray hinges with WD-40

By: Before going to bed tonight

After the Download

Once you have gone through a complete download, you have four choices with everything you've dumped onto paper. I call it the **Four Ds (decisions)**:



DO: You plan to do this today. These 3x5 cards get set aside in a small stack to be handled before the end of today.

DELEGATE: You want it done and have decided to ask someone else to do it. Write down on the 3x5 card who you will delegate this to and when. If you are not doing this today, you can place this task in whatever system you use to remind you of important follow-up (more on that later).

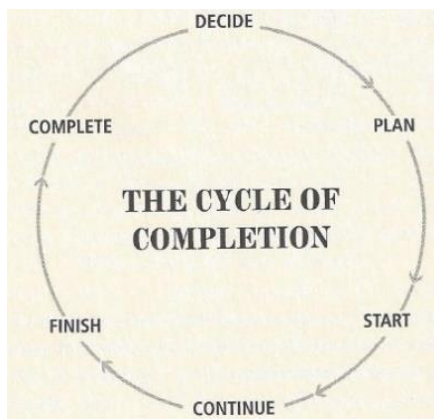


DELAY: You plan to take action, but not today. If you have not yet decided if you will do this, identify when you next want to think about it. Write down on the 3x5 card what the next action is that you will take, and when you will do it. Incorporate this into your reminder system so you remember to follow up at the appropriate time.

DUMP: You've decided not to do it and you're ready to let go of it. You can simply toss this 3x5 card and acknowledge that it is complete. If you've made a commitment to someone else to do something—and you've decided not to do it--renegotiate your commitment before you dump it.



TIP: There are six essential steps required to complete a task.



Starting at the top of this **Cycle of Completion**, you'll see that the first step required is to **DECIDE** to do something. Some people have difficulty making decisions and never get past this step. Once you've decided to do something, you make a **PLAN** for what's next (sometimes there are several steps involved) and when you will do it. Then you **START**, **CONTINUE**, **FINISH**, and acknowledge that it is **COMPLETE**.

Most of us find ourselves getting stuck somewhere in this cycle. Until you go through all six steps--including acknowledging that something is complete--it will remain as a sticky note on your brain.

Take a moment to think about where your sticking points are. Awareness is the first step to making a change.

Incompletions: Trigger Questions

1. List projects started & not completed:

- What's on your desk?
- What's in your drawers?
- What's on your floor/under your desk?
- What's behind your door?
- What's in your briefcase or bags?
- What's in storage boxes?
- What's in the stacks of paper on your credenza or filing cabinet?
- What's on scraps of paper, business cards, receipts?
- What's on your "to do" lists?
- What's on your Post-it notes around your office or on the refrigerator?
- What's in your meeting notes?
- What's in your e-mail box that needs your attention?
- What's on your calendar from previous weeks that did not get handled (family and work calendar?)

2. List projects not yet started:

- What's on your desk?
- What's in your drawers?
- What's on your floor/under your desk?
- What's behind your door?
- What's in your briefcase or bags?
- What's in storage boxes?
- What's in the stacks of paper on your credenza or filing cabinet?
- What's on scraps of paper, business cards, receipts?
- What's on your "to do" lists?
- What's on your Post-it notes around your office or on the refrigerator?
- What's in your meeting notes?
- What's in your e-mail box that needs your attention?
- What's on your calendar from previous weeks that did not get handled (family and work calendar?)

3. What projects are completed that need to be acknowledged as complete?

4. What commitments or promises have you made and not kept? Do you need to follow through or renegotiate? What do you need to clarify or resolve?

5. Are there people waiting for you to get back to them?

6. Are there people you are waiting to hear back from?

7. What do you need to research or look into?

8. Are there professionals or support staff waiting to hear back from you about anything?

- Lawyer
- Accountant
- Consultants
- Administrative assistant
- Other _____

9. What communications need to be handled?

- Phone calls/texts
- Letters
- Cards (greeting, thank you, special event)
- Memos
- E-mails
- Faxes

10. Any important events coming up?

- Dinners
- Parties
- Receptions
- Graduations
- Weddings
- Birthdays
- Anniversaries
- Reunions (family, class, other)
- Holidays/religious events
- Cultural events
- Sporting events

11. Any writing you need to do?

- Drafts
- Reports
- Evaluations, reviews
- Proposals
- Articles
- Promotional/marketing material
- Instructions
- Summaries
- Charting (medical dictation, etc.)
- Minutes of meetings or events
- Rewrite or edit
- Status reports
- Tracking or logging of key communications or conversations
- Billing

12. Anything needing to be done that is related to meetings?

- Anything need to be set or confirmed?
- Do you need to make reservations for transportation, meeting space, a place to stay?
- Do you need to request a meeting from someone?
- Do you need to prepare anything for meetings?
- Debrief of meetings already had?
- Actions or commitments agreed to?
- Any tracking or recording needed?

13. Any read and review needed?

- Documents
- Articles
- Books/publications
- Updates, memos
- Peer review

14. Anything needing attention with financial aspects?

- Accounts
- Cash/cash flow
- Budgets

- Balance sheets
- Assets
- Profit & loss
- Forecasting
- Credit/credit lines
- Loans/mortgages
- Taxes
- Insurance
- Payables
- Billing
- Receivables
- Petty cash
- Banks/bankers
- Investments
- Expense reimbursement or tracking expenses for tax deductions
- Allowance for kids
- College fund
- Setting up accounting software

15. Anything you need to do in the area of planning & organizing?

- Long-term goals
- Short-term goals
- Setting up an effective system for processing and managing paper flow
- Contact management
- Targets/objectives
- Business plans/business planning
- Marketing plans
- Financial planning
- Event planning
- Presentations, meetings
- Conferences
- Organizing space:
 - Main living areas
 - Main working areas
 - On-site storage (garage, attic, storage rooms)
 - Off-site storage (rented storage space)
- Organizing collections (videos, photos, CDs, DVDs, etc.)
- Organizing paper (filing system, tickler file)

16. What about travel & vacation planning?

- Gathering ideas & information
- Making reservations
- Arranging for things to be handled while you're away (coverage at work, house-sitter for pets, holding the mail and newspaper, etc.)
- Documents such as Passport or Visa up-to-date?

17. Anything needing attention about your organization or company?

- Organizational chart
- Lines of authority
- Job descriptions
- Restructuring the organization
- Anything about facilities
- New systems
- Change initiatives
- Leadership
- Succession planning
- Administrative things

- Legal issues
- Forms
- Procedures or instruction manual
- Insurance issues
- Personnel issues
- Staffing – hiring & firing
- Reviews
- Policies & procedures
- Training & education (self & others)
- Staff development
- Compensation -- salary & benefits
- Communication about or with staff
- Morale
- Feedback
- Evaluations
- Rewards/awards
- Acknowledgements
- Corrective action

18. Anything needing your attention with sales & marketing?

- Customers/clients/patients
- Prospective customers/clients/patients
- Lead generation
- Sales process
- Sales training
- Relationship-building
- Social media
- Sales or status reporting
- Tracking
- Customer service
- Promotional campaigns
- Promotional materials
- Public relations / company image

19. Are you waiting for anything?

- Information you have requested
- Things you have delegated to others – projects, tasks
- Replies to communications, proposals
- Answers to questions
- Reimbursements or rebates you've submitted
- Orders you've placed but not received – tickets, products, supplies, equipment

20. Anything you want to do around professional development?

- Seminars/workshops
- Things to learn
- Skills you want to develop or improve on
- Books or journals you want to read
- Subscriptions – subscribe or unsubscribe
- Research on things you want to look into
- Certifications
- Formal education/degrees
- Courses
- Career planning
- Revise resume/CV
- Professional wardrobe
- Professional gear you need
- Organizational systems for your office

- Other _____
- Other _____
- Other _____

21. Any attention needed for volunteer/civic work, projects, or stewardship?

- Service clubs
- Church/synagogue
- Professional organizations/associations you belong to
- Community organizations/non-profits
- School programs
- Contributions
- Planned/Deferred Giving (wills, trusts, etc.)
- Care for the environment (recycling, etc.)
- Other _____
- Other _____
- Other _____

22. Any attention you want to pay to professional and personal relationships?

- Spouse/partner
- Children
- Parents
- Other family
- Friends
- Pets
- Co-workers/peers
- Other professionals in your industry
- Professionals in other industries you want to connect with
- Counselors
- Consultants
- Coaches
- Other _____
- Other _____
- Other _____
- Other _____
- Other _____
- Other _____

23. Anything in your physical environment in need of repair, remodel/update, replacement?

- Computer software – upgrade, update downloads
- Computer hardware
- Printers
- Electronic equipment
- Office equipment
- Appliances
- Entertainment
- Tools
- Construction/remodeling/repairs
- Heating/air conditioning
- Air quality/ventilation
- Plumbing
- Electricity/wiring
- Landscaping
- Driveways, sidewalks
- Roofing
- Walls, flooring, ceilings
- Décor/fixtures

- Furniture
- Lighting
- Signage
- Phones
- Databases
- Fax machines
- Filing systems
- Archives/storage
- Supplies
- Business cards
- Letterhead/envelopes/stationery

24. Do any legal aspects of your life need attention?

- Will/Living Will
- Trusts
- Documents
- Contracts/deeds
- Agreements
- Power of Attorney
- Licenses (business, professional, sporting)

25. Have you loaned anything to anyone who has not returned it?

- Books/publications
- Tools
- Equipment
- Teaching materials
- Other_____

26. Do you need to return anything to anyone you have borrowed something from?

- Books/publications
- Tools
- Equipment
- Teaching materials
- Other_____

27. How about self-care activities?

- Exercise
- Health (doctor, dentist, optometrist, health practitioners, etc.)
- Recreation & sports
- Entertainment
- Hobbies (sewing, knitting, woodwork, building, etc.)
- Diet
- Creative expressions (art, music, photography, etc.)
- Counseling
- Coaching
- Spiritual renewal
- Rest & relaxation/stress reduction
- Books to read
- Music/videos to listen to/view
- Personal development (classes, workshops, seminars, education)
- Other_____
- Other_____
- Other_____
- Other_____
- Other_____

Maintenance

Now that you have gone through a complete download, get in the habit of doing the following:

1. Get all new ideas out of your head and written down on a regular basis, so your brain does not have to remember them all.
2. Have 3x5 cards available in places where you may be reminded of things that need your attention. Have a stack in your bedroom, kitchen, car, purse/wallet, office, etc. If you spend a lot of time driving, you may want to have a voice-activated recording device for downloading ideas – as long as you regularly transcribe these recorded messages to 3x5 cards when you've reached your destination and are no longer driving.
3. At the end of each day, make a decision using the 4 D's (do, delegate, delay, dump) so you can manage new "sticky notes" as they come in. Be sure you incorporate action items that you've identified—what's next and when you'll do it--into your reminder systems for future follow-up.

Here are some additional FREE resources that may help:

- Webinar: [Managing Priorities](#)
- Webinar: [Buried in Paper](#)
- Free Guide: [7 Strategies to Overcome Overwhelm... For Good!](#)



If you struggle to “get your act together” with supportive systems and structures in place to help you manage all the sticky notes, let’s schedule a no-cost [discovery call](#). We’ll discuss the next steps you can take to organize your entire life—so you can enjoy being focused and productive at work and be fully present with family and friends at home.

Schedule your no-cost 30-minute discovery call with me today. During our call we’ll:

1. Talk about your vision for success.
2. Uncover hidden challenges that may sabotage your success.
3. Identify next steps you can take to create your blueprint for getting you from where you are to where you want to be.

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Creating blueprints for purposeful & productive lives.