

Getting Things Done with David Allen & April Perry -- Episode 104



Power of Moms
A Gathering Place for Deliberate Mothers

In this episode, April talks with one of her mentors, David Allen. David Allen is the international bestselling author of *Getting Things Done* and joins us at Power of Moms Radio to announce the release of the newly revised edition of this book -- and to offer hope, support, and practical how-tos for mothers who want relief from piles of papers, emails, tasks, and projects (that too often keep us up at night).

Getting Things Done is the book that inspired our Mind Organization for Moms program here at Power of Moms – which is helping more than 10,000 mothers worldwide apply David’s principles to their family lives.

What is *Getting Things Done*?

Getting Things Done is more than an organization/productivity book.

The concept began when David Allen started delving into lifestyle awareness research for himself; he had done meditation and martial arts and understood the strategic value of clear space – having nothing on his mind and a freedom from distractions. Then, upon noticing that many of his friends were experiencing similar issues in their businesses, the concept morphed into a small consulting practice. Given time, the word spread and grew into a training and coaching program, which led to the book.

Being self-described as lazy, Allen wanted to find something that applied to everybody without changing the concept for each individual. He also wanted to improve their condition without necessarily asking people to transform themselves.

This system does work. Applying the concepts takes very little motivation. These behaviors are not automatic so you do need to direct your **focus**: What question do I need to ask about the email? this idea? this product? What do I need to ask myself about [insert your topic here]? Then take the appropriate action.

Analogy of *Getting Things Done*:

Allen explains that we need an external brain. If you keep a calendar, you already know that your brain alone is not going to remember all the things you need to remember. But you have commitments that don’t necessarily go on a calendar. What is the nature of the commitment?

What is the purpose?

The purpose is to **flourish**. You don’t have to swallow the whole banana. Any part of it helps. Anything that you do to get more stuff out of your head will help:

- Keep a notepad by your bed
- Implement the two-minute rule – if you can do a task in two minutes then *do it*, because you will save time by not having to organize that particular task.

Allen's concept gives people the chance to flourish and do more meaningful tasks without having other tasks fall through the cracks. Flourishing for an 18 year old will look different than for a 52 year old, a stay-at-home dad or a business executive.

Let your head do what it does *better*.

David Allen helps you take care of all the everyday stuff so that you have the freedom to do what you really want to do.

General Reaction:

The information is – you do *this* and you get *this* result. You decide what you want to do. This system gives people hope. It's not motivating to go kick a soccer ball if you don't know where the goal is or if you don't know where the edges of the playing field are. GTD describes the playing field: here is the game -- you choose at what level and how much you want to play.

There is a reason the book is called *Getting Things Done*; however, the word productivity comes with its own set of baggage. Productivity is not business or busyness. **Productivity** is achieving a desired result: if you go on vacation to relax and don't relax, it's an unproductive vacation.

Getting Things Done is based on a formula: What does done mean? and what does doing look like? Define what you want to accomplish and get specific to configure your physical world to make that happen.

What is different about this?

GTD allows you to get control of where you are instead of where you should be. Get your head clear and get on top of what you are doing. Start to notice what you're noticing. If every time you pass the cat you are reminded you need to get cat food but then forget until the cat is noisy at 3 am you aren't noticing. GTD builds a system so that when you tell yourself to do something it will get done.

This system is different because it helps you get control of your life from where you are. If you add all these great ideas (because there are a lot of great ideas out there) but don't have the foundation laid first, you will easily become overwhelmed and nothing will get done. Don't add more to an already full plate.

The book:

The week of the podcast was the week of the new release of *Getting Things Done*. The methodology has not changed. The world has changed. The book allows you to chunk life down into manageable pieces to **focus** appropriately on each one and not get distracted. The book is really a discussion on lifestyle art and craft and helps you get work done. Work, as defined by David Allen, is anything you want to get done that isn't done yet.

There is no distinction between professional and personal. This methodology is equally applicable to students, stay-at-home moms and dads, the clergy, businessmen, etc. This new edition makes the styling more universal. The first edition was for fast track professionals, but now the language has been changed to reflect a universal styling. The biggest ah-ha moment was when Allen realized that this book was applicable to the personal as well as the professional worlds.

How this program works for **Power of Moms** and mothers specifically:

This transformative program has helped mothers control the chaos, get down, play, and accomplish the things that they want to get done.

Understand the components of the system and make the system work in your life-style. The desk of a business executive will look different from the desk of a stay-at-home mom. Their calendars will look different. Their next actions lists will not be the same. But the GTD system helps them accomplish their tasks in a manageable way.

Have the capability to capture thoughts that you can't do right then in the moment that the thought occurs. If your teenager wants to go to a Taylor Swift concert and the tickets aren't on sale yet, make a note for when they do go on sale – don't try to remember, write it down. Organize your thoughts in the midst of constant interruptions and shift your focus as needed.

There is hope for you and also for your children. This program is not just learning the GTD system for your, but also teaching it to the next generation. April has been teaching this system to her children. They know what a tickler file is. They have their email inboxes at zero. They keep track of their activities on their calendars and their own next actions lists and feel less stress because of it.

Weekly review is critical for maintaining this trusted system. David Allen had the opportunity to participate in an hour long weekly review with 8, 9, and 10 year olds and they were so excited to accomplish their tasks for the week.

This program is also being implemented in school systems using the slogan: "Get clear, Get current, Get creative". Once you're current with all your obligations and cleared your mind, you have the ability to get creative and research and do whatever you are interested in.

For more information:

- @gtdguy on twitter
- gettingthingsdone.com
- dallen45 on Instagram

Power of Moms' has a free Master the Whirlwind ecourse that runs through some of the steps developed in *Getting Things Done*. Mind Organization for Moms is April's program based on GTD.

Notes by: Rosie Liljenquist