

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLETE MAP OF EVERY THOUGHT YOU THINK

This analysis maps the book *How to Make a Complete Map of Every Thought You Think* as a procedural manual, focusing on the mechanics of implementation while preserving the author's internal logic and sequence-awareness.

Phase 1: Materials Procurement and Setup

Entry Conditions

- Acceptance of the "immobilization" trade-off: The practitioner must commit to being incapable of going anywhere without a cache of notes¹.
- Rejection of digital tools (e.g., Palm Pilots/Computers) for note capture due to UI friction and lack of spatial mapping

Observable Actions

- **Acquire three 4-color pens** (Red, Green, Blue, Black). Designate one for primary use, one for backup in a trusted location, and one as a tertiary backup
- **Procure 8.5" x 11" college-ruled 3-hole punch paper.** Maintain an inventory of at least 300 sheets (2 reams) at all times
- **Set up binders** with 3-hole punch capabilities, donut ring protectors, tab dividers, and small stickies for map management
- **Create a "Lost Pen" search list** in the notes (e.g., Jacket, Pockets, Inside Notebooks) to mitigate downtime.

Internal Checks

- Are you using a 4-color pen? The ability to switch colors rapidly is the prerequisite for visual-verbal speed
- Is the paper density maximized? Use "graduate-student rule" (40+ lines per page) if possible to increase information density⁸.

Failure Modes

- **The "Spiral Notebook" trap:** Using self-contained notebooks prevents the later

reorganization and "floating" of pages required by the system

- **UI Distraction:** Using a computer or PDA, which forces the mind to navigate software menus instead of recording thoughts

Transition Logic

- Physical infrastructure completion enables the "Never Be Without Record" mandate.

Phase 2: Capture Operations (The Speed List)

Entry Conditions

- Permanent possession of a pen and a "Pan-Subject Speeds" sheet

Observable Actions

- **Record every thought** more significant than basic maintenance chores (e.g., "take out trash").
- **Write thoughts as single-line entries** (1–50 words). Focus on "terse" over "verbose"¹
- **Apply "Psi" glyphs** to the margin to categorize the thought type (e.g., Problem, Goal, Question, Starting Point)
- **Use the Pan-Subject Speed sheet** when away from specific subject binders; transcribe these to subject-specific lists as soon as possible

Internal Checks

- "Always record" and "Never be without record".
- Are you relying on memory pegging devices only when physically unable to write?.

Failure Modes

- **Thought Resistance:** Actively choosing not to think about a topic because the subsequent note-keeping work is too demanding.
- **Bucket-Level Default:** Recording chronologically (diary style) without intending to map the entry.

Transition Logic

- Accumulation of unmapped speed thoughts creates "structural tension" that necessitates Subject Architecture.

Phase 3: Intra-Subject Architecture (The Subject Unit)

Entry Conditions

- Detection of "gravitational mass"—a cluster of related speed thoughts that naturally attract more thoughts.

Observable Actions

- **Create a P&P (Purpose & Principles) page** for the subject. Define boundaries—what is included and what is excluded
- **Assign a 1–3 word title** to the subject.
- **Extract sub-subjects** when a general category becomes "congested" (e.g., splitting "Metaphysics" into "Ethics" and "Imagination")

Internal Checks

- Is the subject title specific enough to serve as a "star" in a mental constellation?
- Are you documenting the "wormholes" (interconnections) between this subject and others on the P&P?.

Failure Modes

- **Ontological Perfectionism:** Attempting to find "cosmic eternal" categories instead of mirroring your actual subjective mind
- **Over-Structuring:** Creating 8 "magnet words" for only 2 thoughts.

Transition Logic

- Establishment of a subject unit allows for "Trickle-Down Mapping" on an SMOC.

Phase 4: Mapping Logic (The SMOC Mechanics)

Entry Conditions

- A list of unmapped speeds and a Subject Map of Contents (SMOC) page.

Observable Actions

- **Select a speed thought**, preferably from the bottom of the list.
- **Determine the mental structure:** Ask, "How do I think about this idea?".
- **Draw "Magnet Words"** (structure) and place the speed thought ID (e.g., S12) in proximity to its related concept
- **Check off the speed thought** on the original list once it is mapped.
- **Apply non-linear positioning:** Place related concepts close to each other regardless of physical page order.

Internal Checks

- Is the map "mentally uncoersive"? (i.e., you do not have to read it start-to-finish to understand the structure)
- Are you using color/size to denote importance? (Big entries for important items, small for minor ones).

Failure Modes

- **The "TOC" Regression:** Defaulting to a linear list (Table of Contents), which provides only two points of context (above/below).
- **Clean-Page Fear:** Hesitating to "intentionally fuck things up" or tolerate errors on the map.

Transition Logic

- Map saturation (density) requires a "Version Update"—freezing the current map, archiving it, and starting a new version

Phase 5: Knowledge Consolidation (POI, REF, RS)

Entry Conditions

- The map identifies a "Point of Interest" requiring deep dissertation or research

Observable Actions

- **Compose a POI (Point of Interest)** for long-form thoughts. Assign a "P#" ID
- **Record References (REF)** for external material. Use icons like the Kanji for "book" or "person" to denote sources
- **Initiate Research (RS)** for active inquiry intended to fill gaps in the map.
- **Link back to the SMOC:** Every POI, REF, and RS must be indexed on the subject map to remain findable.

Internal Checks

- Does the map serve as the "Assembly Point" where all disparate entry types (Speeds, POIs, RS) meet?.

Failure Modes

- **Isolated Dissertation:** Writing a long entry (POI) but failing to map it, effectively "losing" the thought in the binder.

Transition Logic

- The proliferation of subjects requires "Extra-Subject Architecture" to maintain "Situation Awareness."

Phase 6: Extra-Subject Architecture (The GSMOC)

Entry Conditions

- Management of multiple subject binders.

Observable Actions

- **Construct a GSMOC (Grand Subject Map of Contents):** A master map of every subject you think about

- **Map subject connections:** Arrange subjects by their actual relationships in your life, not alphabetically
- **Update periodically:** The GSMOC should be a "mirror of your mind" over a 3–5 month period.

Internal Checks

- Can you see the "Mental Terrain" of your entire life at a single glance?

Failure Modes

- **Stale Mapping:** Failing to update the GSMOC as subjects evolve or "blow up" into smaller, more specific subjects

Transition Logic

- Full system operation typically lasts 3 months, followed by an archival phase (unless committed to a monastic lifestyle)