

# TODO The Planet

Building a sustainable security career and personal life with GTD

Justin Steven

>>>

# Hello! 🙌

- > I'm Justin
- > Head of Research at Tanto Security
- > I am a busy person 😅



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A photograph of a person's hands forming a heart shape against a blurred background of warm, glowing lights. The person is wearing a red watch on their left wrist and a black and white polka-dot sleeve on their right arm.

# This is not a mental health talk

- > I am entirely unqualified
- > This is my story
- > I am not saying "just use a planner" or that it's okay to overwork yourself
- > If you feel anxious, stressed, or have difficulty with executive functioning, help is available ❤️



IMO they're too intuitive for their own good

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Tue

9

Put the bins out 17:00

Thu

25

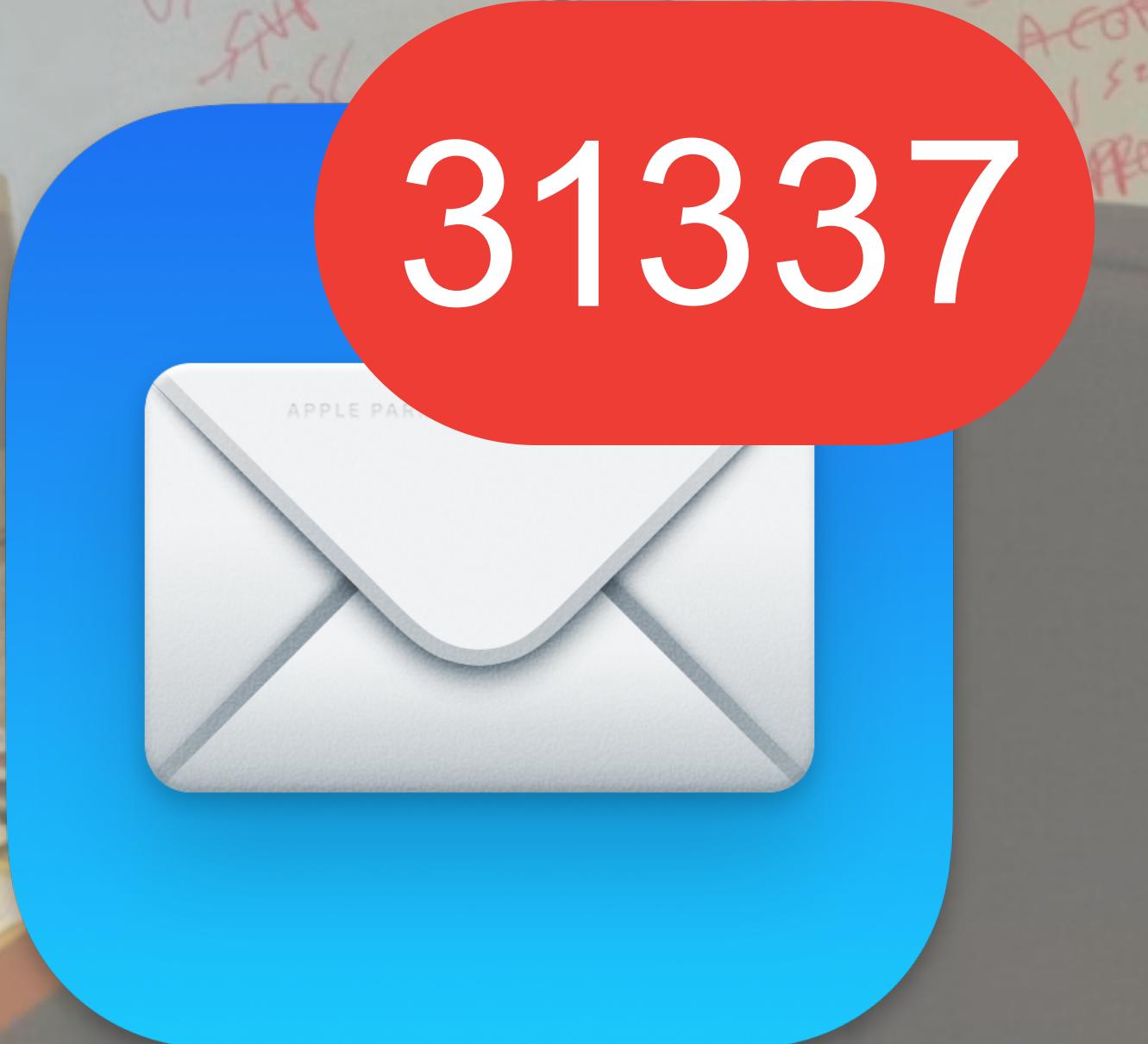
BSides CBR

Thu

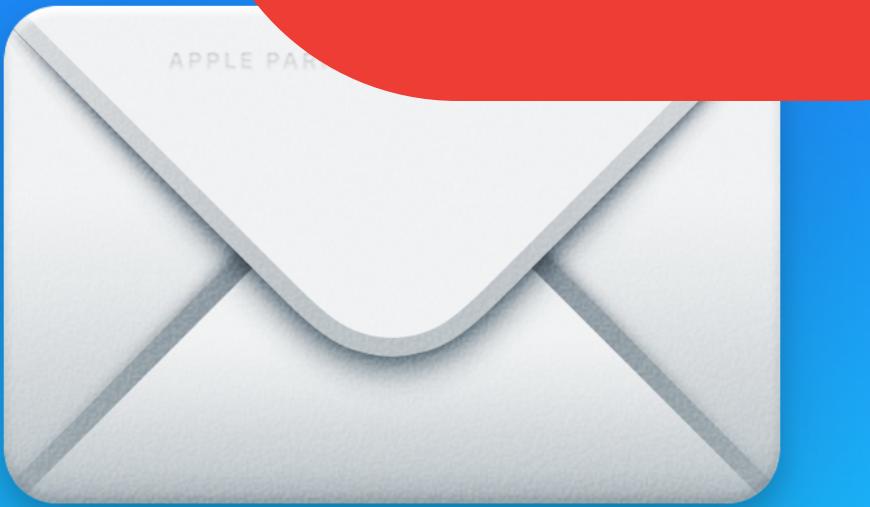
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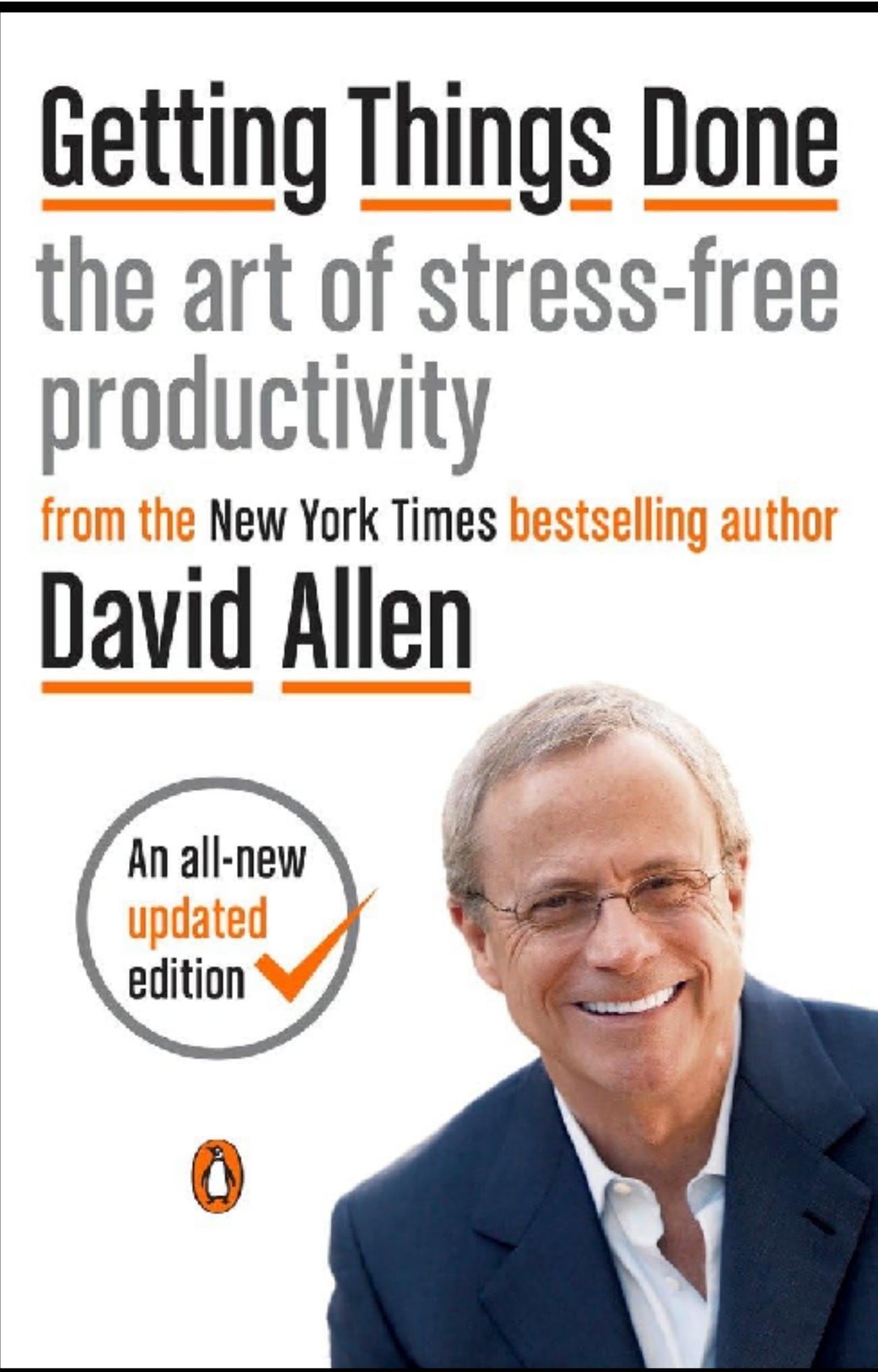
Write BSides slides!!!





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*"Your mind is for having ideas,  
not holding them"*

*David Allen*

**\*I am not affiliated with David Allen or Getting Things Done®**



# How has GTD helped me?

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# I am more reliable

- > My brain is **not good at remembering commitments**
  - I forget about stuff until the last minute
  - Or until it's past due 
- > My system helps me to **deliver or renegotiate on my promises**

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# I feel more relaxed

- > My brain is bad at remembering **but it tries really hard**
  - *"Wait, I feel like I'm forgetting something"*
  - *"Buy coffee beans buy coffee beans buy coffee beans"*
- > I can instead **trust my system** to remember ideas and commitments
  - My mind can be creative and present 😊

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# I can make better choices

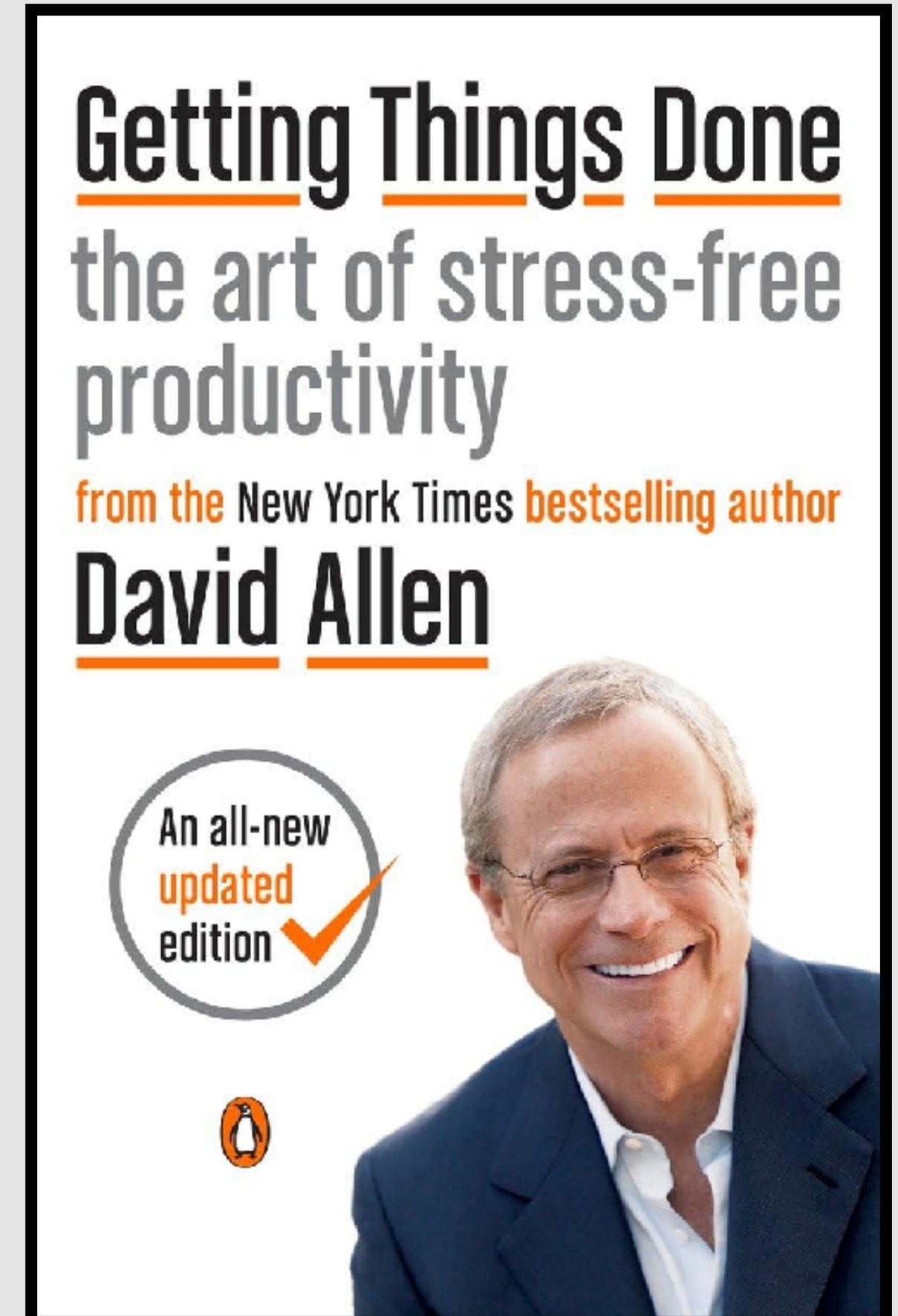
- > My **weekly reviews** set me up for success
- > My projects have crisp **next actions**
- > Tagging reveals stuff I can do based on my **context**
- > Crazy ideas go on the **someday/maybe** list
  - *"You can do anything, but you can't do everything"* –David Allen

# The GTD Methodology

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# Getting Things Done (GTD)

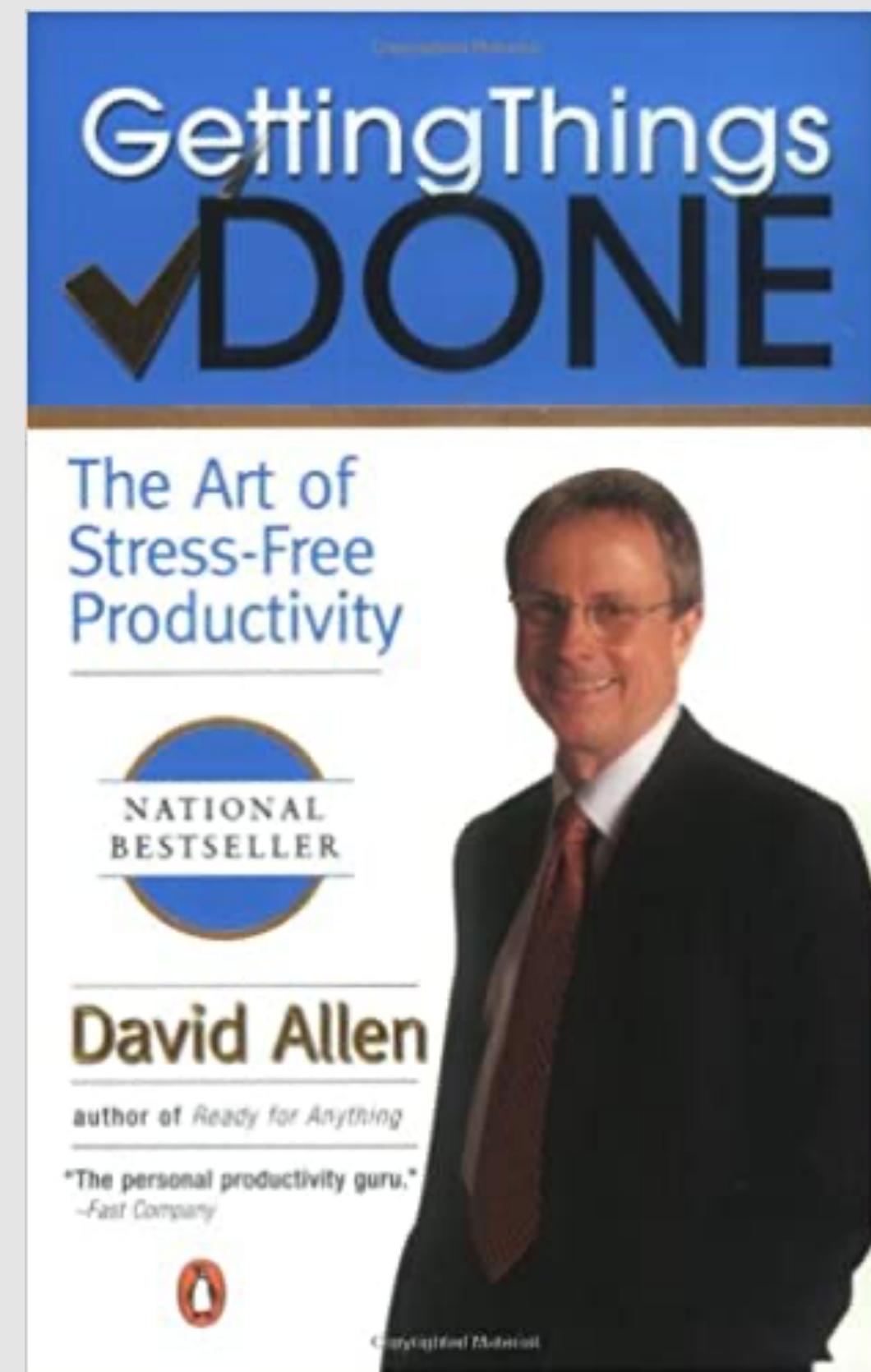
- > Published 2001, revised 2015
- > Describes a **trusted system**
  - External from your mind
  - To hold onto projects, tasks and ideas



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1999



2001



2007

>>>



# Apps

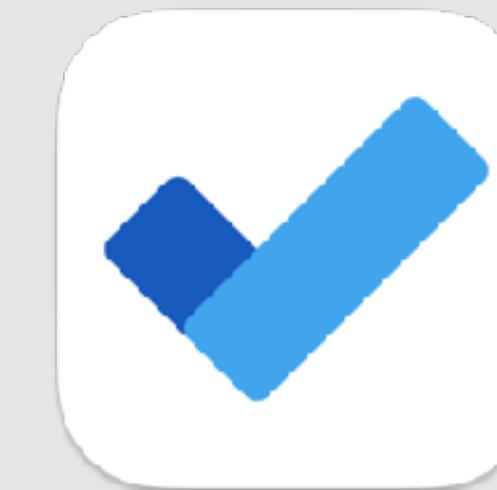
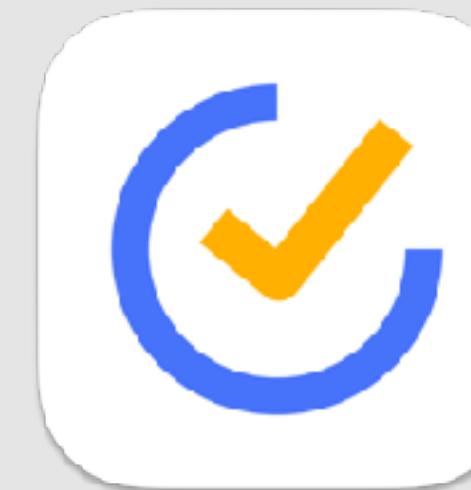
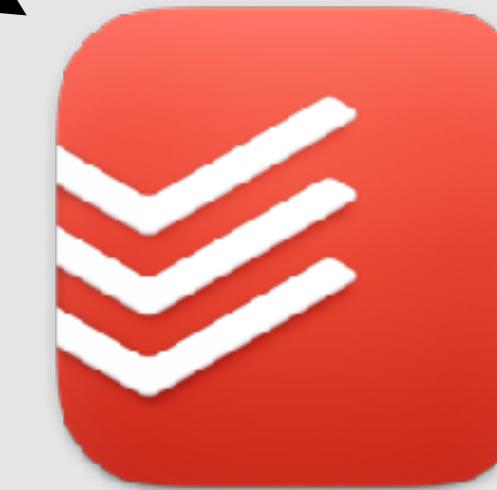
I use OmniFocus

Not cheap – \$230 upfront

Apple-only 😞

Todoist is popular

\$8 per month



- > Some were made with GTD in mind
- > Most can be used to implement GTD
- > All of them can be used sub-optimally
- > Try a few out and see what works for you
  - Or just try what came with your phone!

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# GTD is an **investment**

- > Many apps have an up-front or subscription **cost**
- > A system takes **valuable time** to set up and maintain
  - I've spent hundreds of hours working on my system
  - It's been incredibly worth it for me

*"Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe"*

*Abraham Lincoln*

>>>

**Brain dump**  
(Once)

**Rapid Capture**  
(Always)

**Recurrence**

**Process**  
- Clarify  
- Context  
- Projects  
- Next Actions

**Do**  
- Context

**Someday/Maybe**

**Weekly Review**

**Trust**

**Where we  
are going**

It may seem straightforward but there are  
**important ways** that the **components support each other**

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# Brain Dump

## Things as reminders

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# Collect all of the **open loops**

- > Anything that's **on your mind** – consciously or unconsciously
  - Things that aren't the way you want them to be
  - Things that keep you up at night
  - Things that are nagging at you

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# If it's been on your mind, **capture it**

- > There are **no wrong answers**
- > You don't need to be descriptive – **a couple of words** is fine
- > You don't yet need to know how you're going to resolve the open loop
- > You're not committing to resolving the open loop
  - The system will **hide stuff** you don't want to or can't do yet

*"Better out than in"*

>>>

# Career

Something your  
boss asked  
you to do

Training that  
interests you

Find a  
local meetup

Make a  
career change

# Home

Buy stuff  
for dinner

Vacuum floors

Replace  
shower curtain

Renovate  
kitchen

Buy art and  
house plants

# Tech

Reinstall OS

Patch router

Do backups

Test backups

Turn on MFA  
everywhere

Try NixOS

# Finances

Pay down a  
credit card

Cancel old  
subscriptions

Check super

Investing?

Financial  
advisor?

# Don't forget **fun stuff** and **big dreams**

- > **Movies** you've been told you "have to" watch
- > **Friends** you want to reconnect with
- > **Places** you want to **visit**
  - Near - restaurants, museums, parks, shops
  - Afar - Japan, South Korea, Germany, Disneyland
- > The **really hard problem** you've been thinking you could solve

# Do not skip the brain dump

- > You might want to get started ASAP
- > "*What's the worst that could happen?*" – You, now
  - "*GTD is nice but it doesn't handle everything*" – You, in a few months
- > You'll still end up doing the brain dump down the line
  - Until then, your system won't work as effectively as it could

# Doing a brain dump can be **confronting**

- > **My list was scary and overwhelming**
  - **But it was worse when it was on my mind**
    - **Dozens of vague dissatisfactions**
    - **Nagging discontentment**
    - **Hard projects on the horizon**
      - **Or in the rear view mirror** 

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# Don't panic ❤️

- > **The system will hide stuff**
  - Until you can and want to do something about it
- > **It will faithfully remember stuff so you don't have to**

*"Your mind is for having ideas, not holding them"*

*David Allen*

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**Brain Dump**  
**Things as reminders**  
**The Two Minute Rule**

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# I used **clutter** to remind me of things

- > A can of WD-40 to make my chair less squeaky
- > A pile of paperwork that I needed to complete
- > A tower of books that I wanted to read

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# Clutter was a **poor reminder** for me

- > It took **physical space** from my creative and focused work
- > It took **mental space** every time I saw it
  - *"Oh yeah I really need to do that"*
- > It was **vague** and it constantly invited me to work out what it meant
  - *"Why is that there again? I think it's for my squeaky chair."*

# Remembering is my **system's job**

- > I don't need to **use my brain** to remember things
  - "*Buy coffee beans buy coffee beans buy coffee beans*" –Me
- > I don't need to **use my space** to remind me of things
  - "*Fix your chair fix your chair fix your chair*" –WD-40

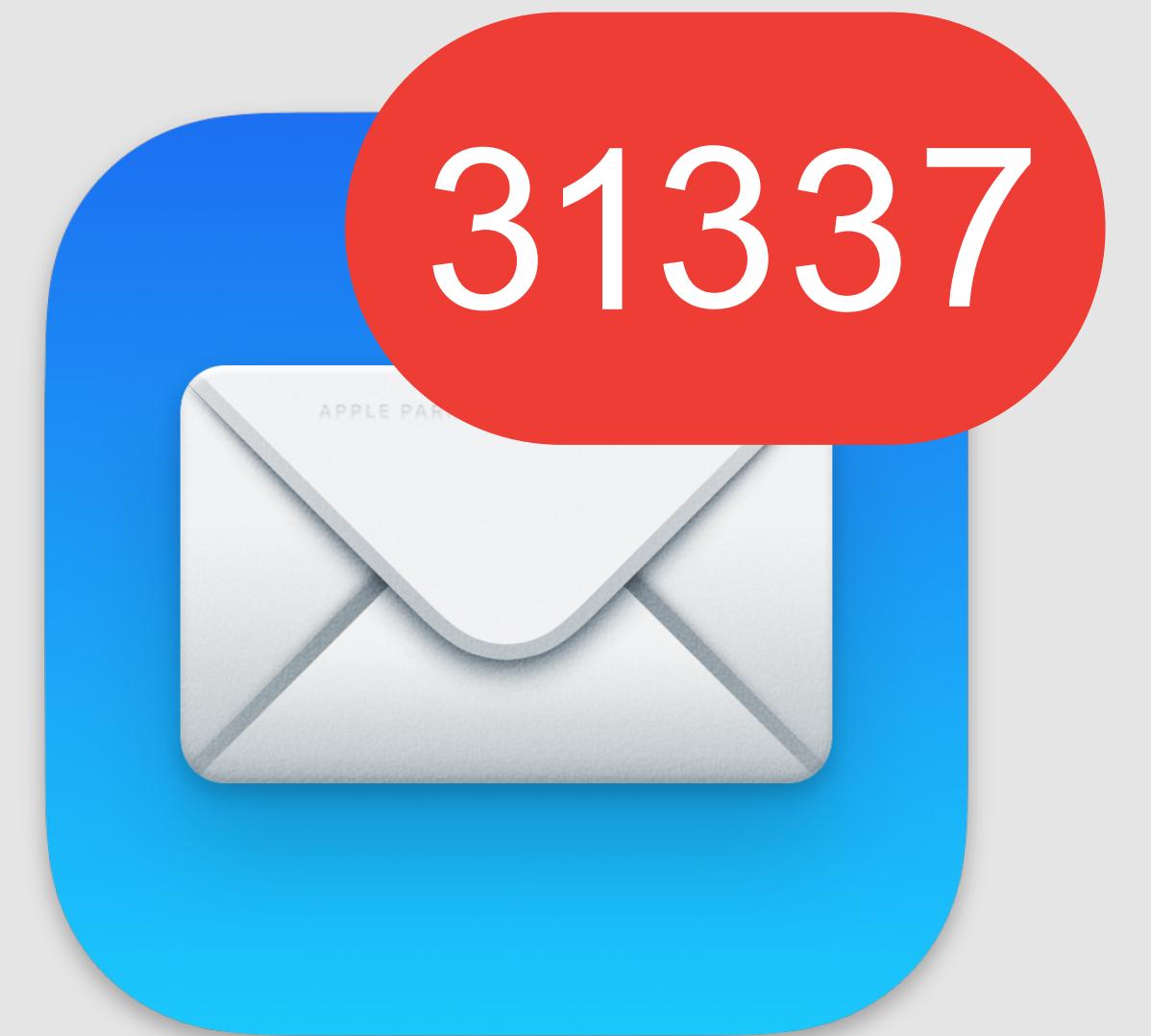
# Scan your environments for clutter

- > **Desk, benches, kitchen, bathroom, bedside table, car, office ...**
  - If it's junk, **toss it**
  - If it's a reminder, **capture the open loop and put the thing away**
    - "Apply for building key fob (form is in top drawer)"

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# AAAAAAAAAAAAA AAAAA

- > "Mark as unread" was a bad TODO list for me
- > Big number loses all of its meaning
  - *"There are things in here you need to do"*
  - *"Read through me again to figure it out :3"*



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**"There is no reason to ever have the same thought twice,  
unless you like having that thought."**

– David Allen

**"There is no reason to read the same email twice,  
unless you like reading that email."**

– Justin Steven  
(Thanks David Allen!)

>>>

# Consider **mailbox bankruptcy**

- > It's ok, GTD can take care of it this time
- > Add recent stuff to the brain dump
  - Then archive **everything**
- > Add flagged emails to the brain dump
  - Then **unflag them**



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Things as reminders

The Two Minute Rule

Process the brain dump

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# The two minute rule

- > If something would take less than **two minutes** from **where you are now**
  - Then **do it now**
  - Otherwise **capture it** and do it later



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# The two minute rule

- > Be honest with yourself – two minutes isn't very long
- > If you're **in flow state** then IMO you should ignore the two minute rule
  - On average it takes 23 minutes to recover from an interruption
  - Put it in the system and stay locked in 💪

The Two Minute Rule  
Process the brain dump  
Tagging

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# Process the brain dump

1. Clarify things so they are **actionable**
2. Tag things with **context**
3. Identify **projects** and add **next actions**

Relax, the next few sections  
are all about this stuff 😊

**Tip: Do it from top to bottom**

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# Don't panic ❤️

- > Processing something is still not committing to doing it
- > Soon we're going to **hide stuff**
  - Stuff we can't do yet or don't want to do yet
  - It's still a relief to know that it's **captured** and **consciously deferred**

*"You can do anything, but you can't do everything"*

David Allen

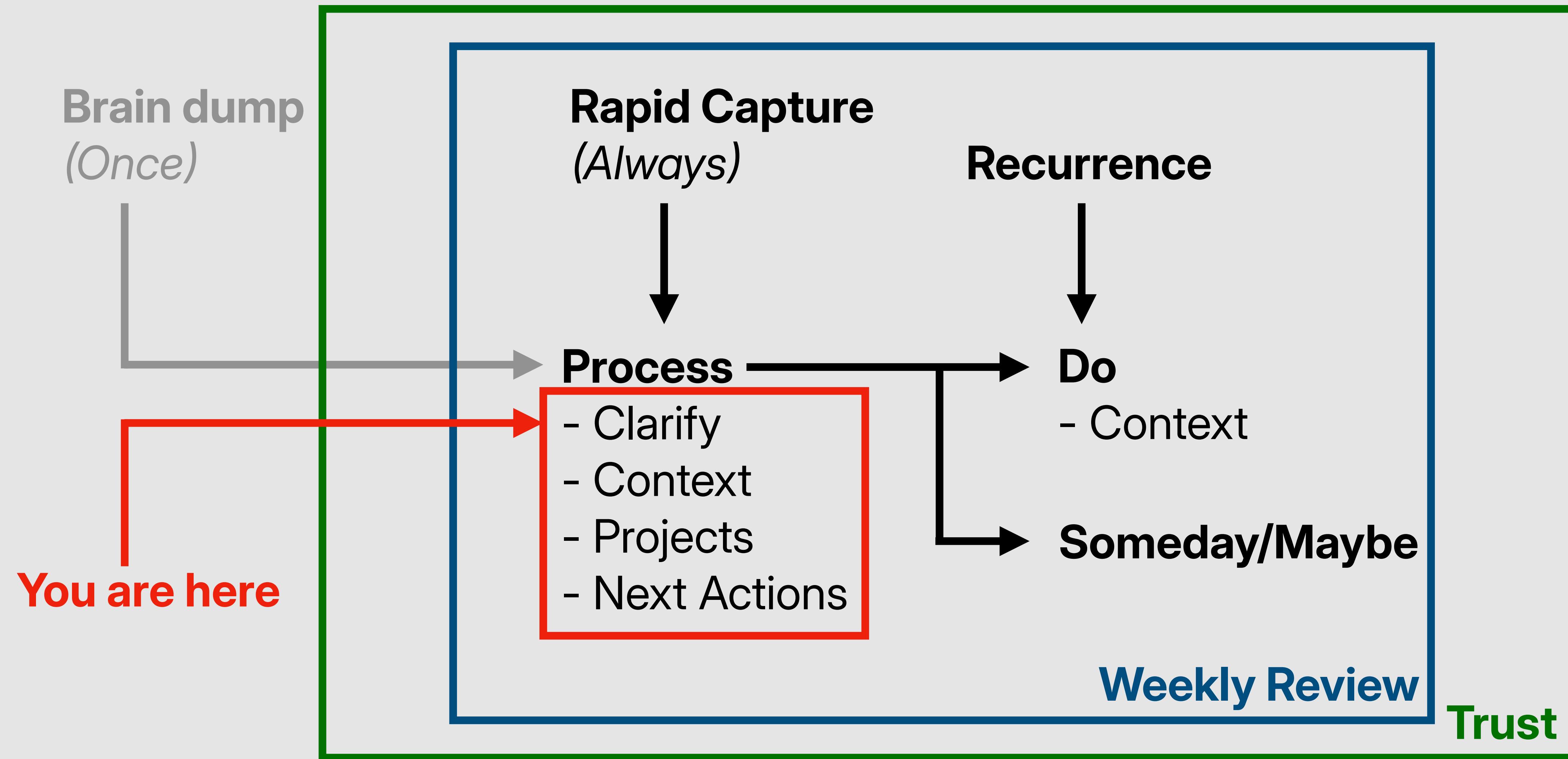
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Process the brain dump

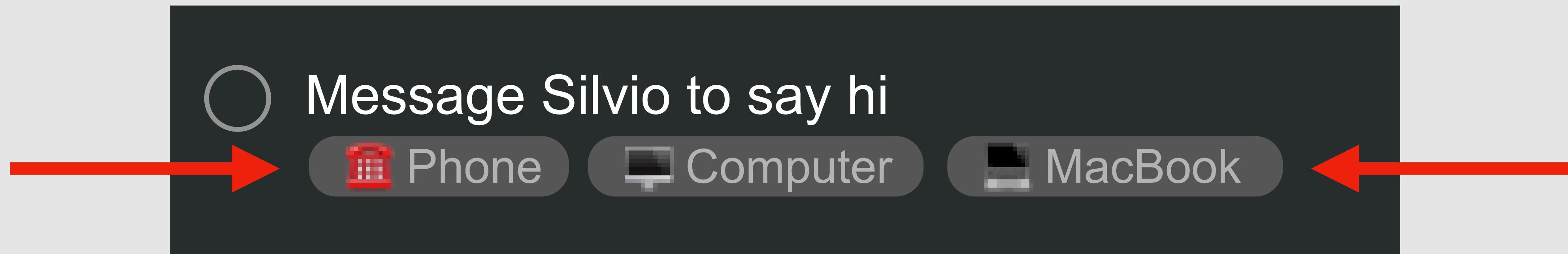
Context and Tagging

Tasks vs. Projects

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**Most apps support tagging  
(If yours doesn't then get a better app)**

# I use **two types** of tag

## 1. Context

- A GTD concept that represents a **place or mode of working**
- Every task **must** have one or more contexts

## 2. Auxiliary

- Not really a GTD concept but useful as a secondary filter
- Use them if they're useful but don't forget a context!

**My place-based contexts**

- > Home
- > Office
- > Out and About

**My modal contexts**

- > Computer
- > MacBook
- > Phone

**My auxiliary tags**

- > Waiting For
- > Melbourne
- > Brisbane

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# My place-based contexts

- > **Home** - Stuff I can only do from home
- > **Office** - Stuff I can only do at the office
- > **Out and About** - Stuff that I can only do IRL

Note: If I can do a task from anywhere with, say, my computer, then it doesn't get a place-based context tag

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## Home

Clean shower  
Watch Predestination  
Play Hollow Knight: Silksong

Patch router

**Call mum**

## Office

Await delivery  
of stickers  
Restock stickers  
in backpack  
Basically just things  
to do with merch  
I have a laptop and  
I can work from home  
come and find us if you want a tshirt

## Out and About

Buy stuff to make  
bolognese for dinner  
Collect stickers  
from post office  
Get haircut  
Check out some new  
bar/cafe/restaurant

>>>

# My modal contexts

- > **Computer** - Stuff I can do anywhere from my Linux machine
  - e.g. locked in at my desk
- > **MacBook** - Stuff I can do anywhere from my MacBook
  - e.g. chilling on the couch
- > **Phone** - Stuff I can do anywhere from my phone
  - e.g. from bed

# Computer

Buy concert ticket

Message Silvio

Send a simple email

Send a complex email

Do security research

# MacBook

Buy concert ticket

Message Silvio

Send a simple email

Send a complex email

Make memes\*

# Phone

Buy concert ticket

Message Silvio

Send a simple email

Post memes\*

**It's okay to have different tags for similar devices  
They're your contexts!**

\*Follow @tantosec  
on Instagram



# My Auxiliary Tags

## > Waiting For - stuff that's blocking me

- Waiting for a package, for a colleague, for Silvio to get back to me ...
  - Get an email saying your package has shipped?  
Capture it as "waiting for" and archive the email
- Persistently paused, and thus hidden from my default view
  - I have a recurring task to check the "Waiting For" tag for trouble

## > Cleaning - sometimes I'm just in the mood for cleaning

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# Melbourne vs. Brisbane

- > I want to capture stuff I can only do when I next go to **Brisbane**
  - Hug mum, go to the casino with Dad, see old friends ...
- > I want to be able to pause the **Melbourne** tag when I'm travelling
  - I don't want to see "Vacuum floors" when I'm picking my toes in Fiji
    - But I have a recurring task for while I'm travelling to check in on this tag

**Remember: A purpose of the system is to  
hide stuff until you can and want to do it**

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# High Energy vs. Low Energy

- > I don't currently use these but I know some people love them
- > Having a **low mood day?**
  - Filter for "low energy" and do the easy stuff ❤️
- > Having a **banger day?**
  - Filter for "high energy" and do future you a favour 💪

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# Tagging **tl;dr**

- > Every task must have **one or more contexts**
- > Use auxiliary tags only as much as they're helpful
  - If you overdo it you'll get overwhelmed
  - Delete tags that aren't serving you

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# Context and Tagging

## Tasks vs. Projects

### Use due dates with caution

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# Tasks

- > **Things that only take one step**
  - Clean shower
  - Agree to lease renewal
  - Ask mum for lasagne recipe

# Projects

- > **Things that take multiple steps**
  - Renovate the bathroom
  - Find a new apartment
  - Catalogue family recipes

The distinction seems deceptively simple

>>>

# Beware projects in disguise

- > Some things seem simple singular
  - Buy a dog house
  - Go to BSides CBR
- > If you find yourself saying:
  - "First I'd need to" or "Then I'd need to"
    - It's actually a project

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# Clarify your tasks

- > Bad: "Bathroom tap"
- > Bad: "Fix bathroom tap"
- > Good: "Email real estate to fix wobbly bathroom tap"
- > Good: "Replace washer in bathroom tap"
  - But at this point it's sounding suspiciously like a project

Ensure tasks are **clear** and **actionable**  
There should be **zero friction** for future you

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# Populate your projects

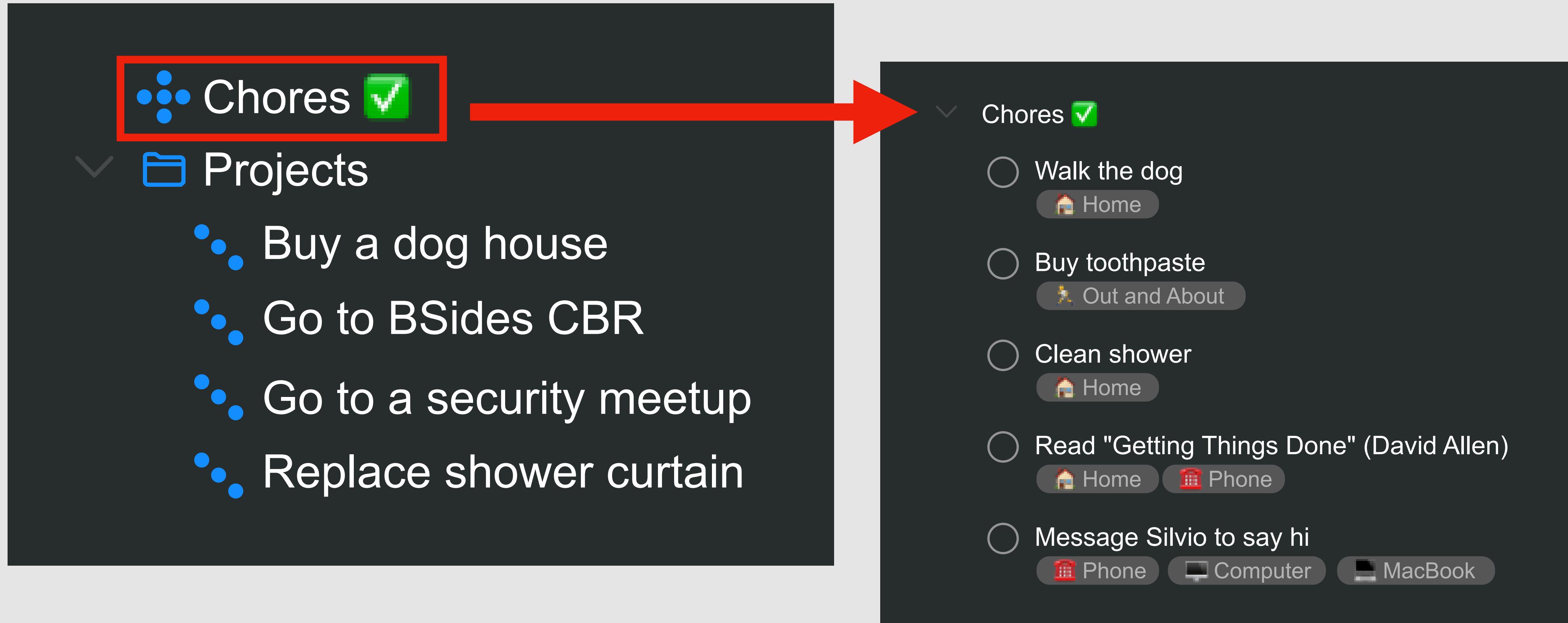
- > Projects must **always** have a clear and actionable task
  - This is known as a **next action**
- > A project's tasks must still have at least one **context** tag each
- > Sections within projects may be serial, parallel, or a mix

# Don't plan the whole project up front

- > **It's okay to plan all of it if you want!**
  - The problem is, plans change
- > **It's also okay to just add a next action**
  - Completing it will probably make subsequent tasks evident anyway  
(which you need to add immediately - projects must always have a next action)

**Do whatever you need to do to get it off your mind**

>>>



**Put non-project tasks in a generic "Chores" project once it is **actionable** and **tagged** to get it out of your Inbox**



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# Next Actions

- ▼ Buy a dog house
  - Choose a dog house
    - MacBook Computer
  - Buy the dog house
    - Out and About

- ▼ Buy a dog house
- ▼ ○ Choose a dog house
  - MacBook Computer
- Search reddit for what's important in a dog house
  - MacBook Computer
- Ask Brendan which dog house he bought
  - MacBook Computer Phone
- Buy the dog house
  - Out and About

> Not a great next action

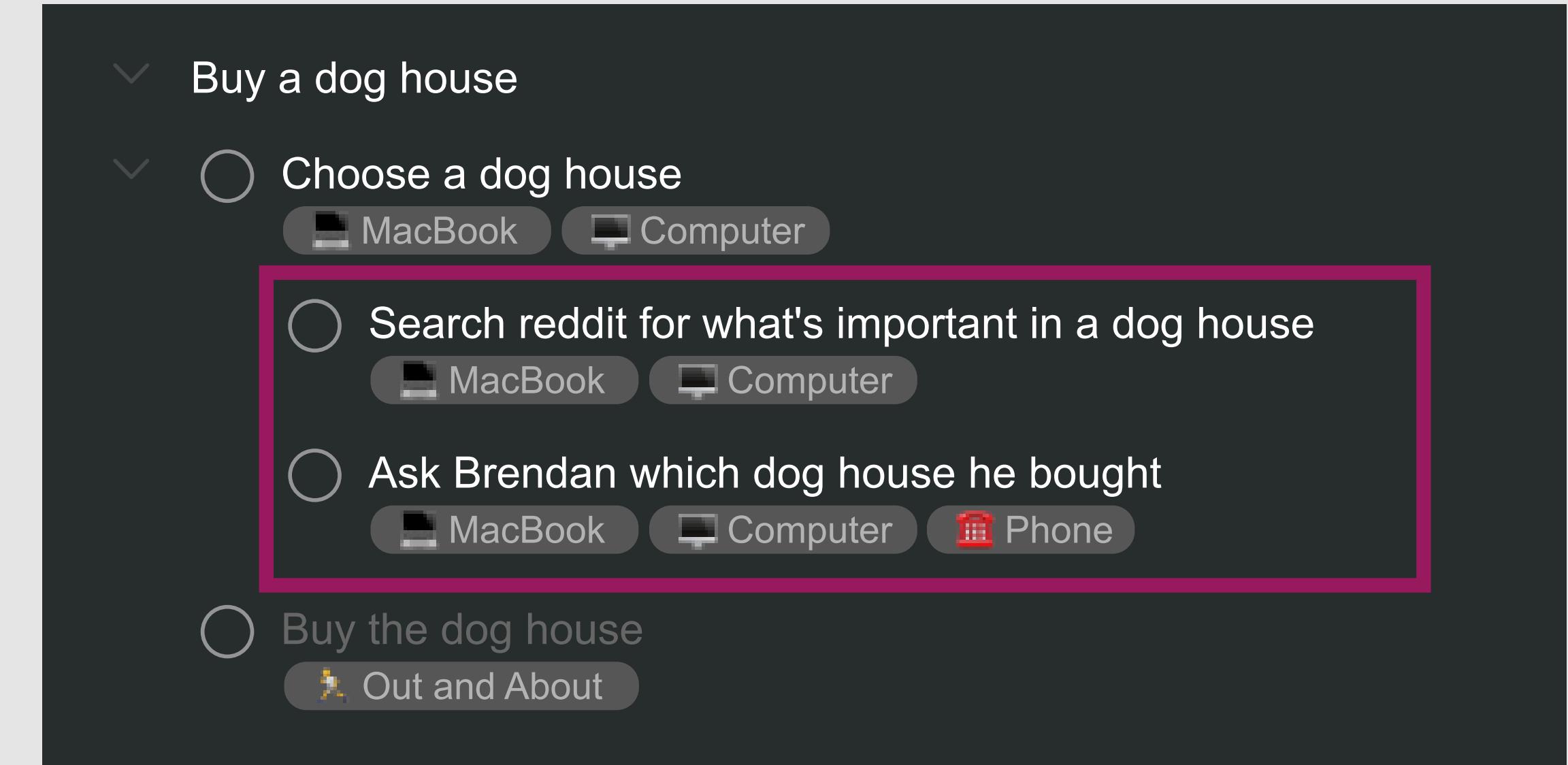
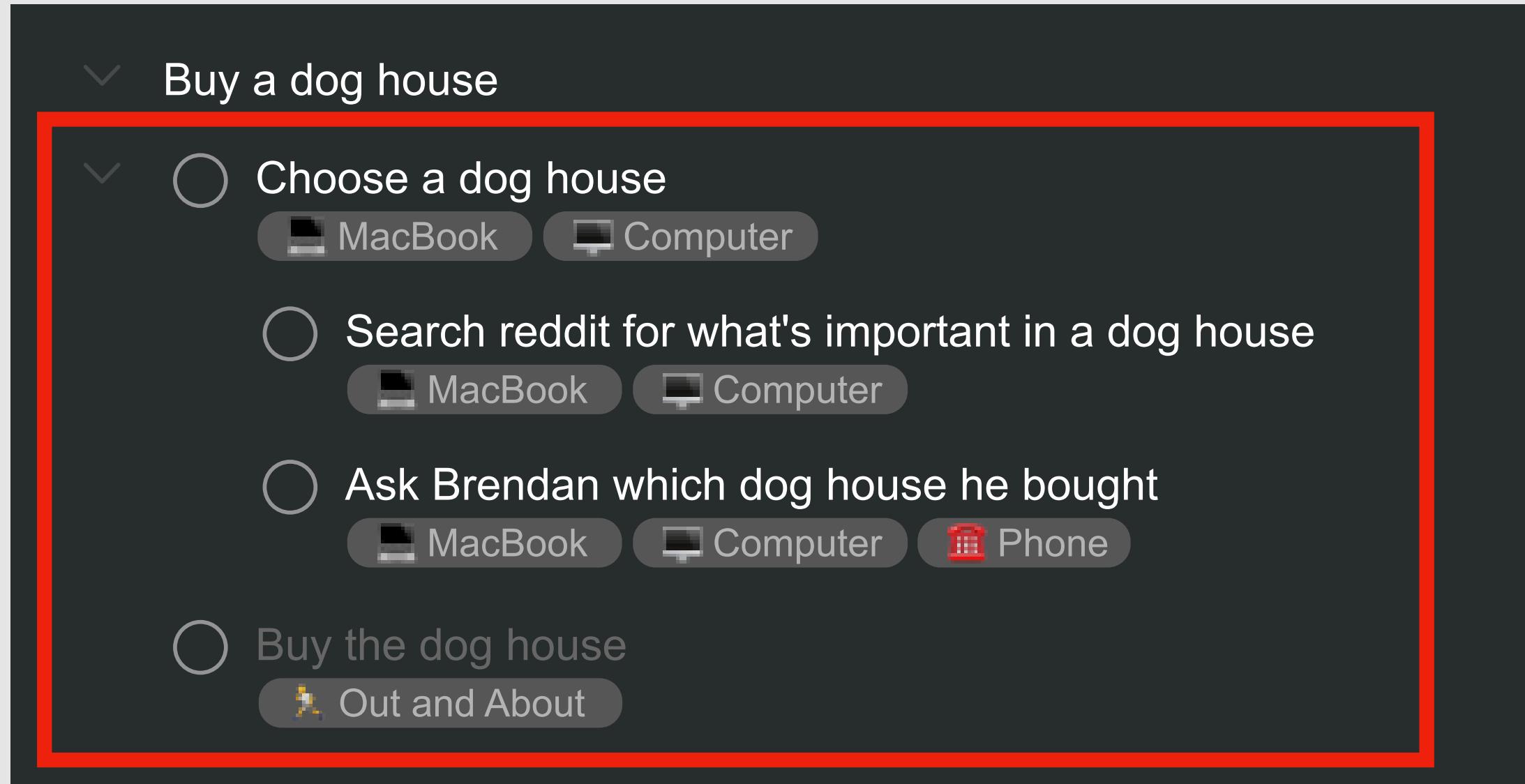
> I might not want  
to engage with this

> Better next actions

> Doing them will inform  
future next actions

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# Serial vs. parallel project sections



- > The project itself is set to **serial**
- > Buying the dog house is hidden until you've chosen a dog house

- > Choosing a dog house is **parallel**
- > You can do either of the subtasks depending on your context

Note: These screenshots were taken with "View all remaining" turned on

I would switch to "View available" day-to-day so I can hide the clutter

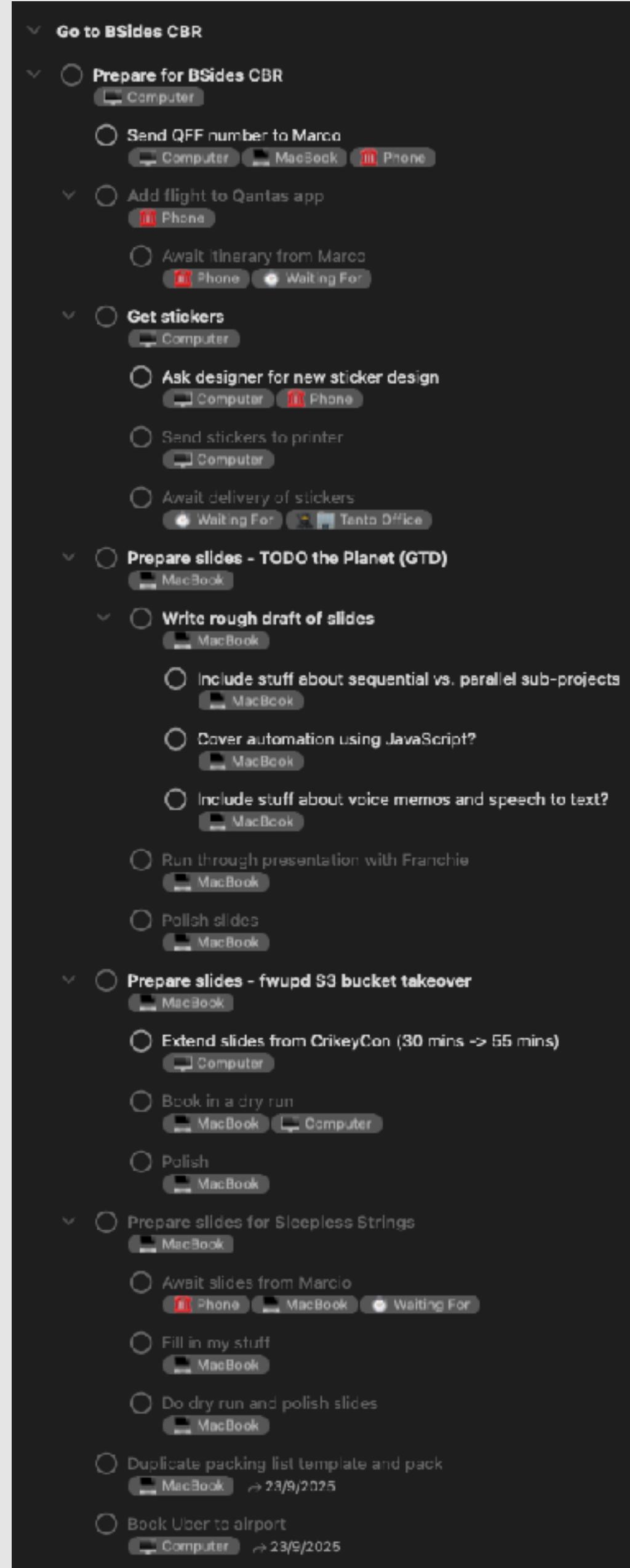
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# Next Actions

- ▼ Go to BSides CBR
  - Prepare for BSides CBR Computer
  - Fly to Canberra Out and About
  - Be at BSides! Out and About

- > **Absolute stinker of a next action**
- > **Zero percent chance that I'll engage with this**
- > **Every time I see it I'm asked to solve a puzzle**

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> This would actually get me to BSides Canberra

> It's basically a collection of mini-projects

– Uses parallel and sequential sections  
to keep things moving

> Packing my bag and booking an Uber is  
**deferred until the day before I leave**

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# Checkpoint

- > You've processed the whole brain dump
  - You've gotten some **two minute** stuff done 💪
  - You've created **projects** with **next actions**
  - Every task is **actionable** and tagged with **context**
- > The best part is, you'll never need to do a brain dump again 😊

# Tasks vs. Projects

Use due dates with caution

Set up recurring tasks and projects

>>>

# Danger zone

- > "*I want to do this by the end of the weekend*"
- > "*I will pass my OSCP by the end of December*"
- > You'll start putting due dates everywhere
  - To "keep you on track"
  - To "help with your discipline"



Photograph of Justin Steven  
Getty Images

>>>

# Be **careful**

- > Due dates are for when there is a **specific penalty** for missing them
  - An actual reprimand from your boss
  - Real disappointment from a client
  - A late fee or a fine
  - Being on a stage with crappy slides or no slides



# Misuse of due dates leads to **distrust**

- > **Four "overdue" and seven "due soon" tasks becomes your new normal**
  - You start feeling guilty
  - You stop paying attention to your fake due dates
  - You miss an **actually important deadline**

If everything is urgent, nothing is urgent

>>>

# Just say no to due dates

- > Just stop using them! (except for the real deadlines)
- > Trust that you will engage regularly with your system and your contexts
- > It will all get done in time ❤️

Use due dates with caution

Set up recurring tasks and projects

Rapid Capture

>>>

# This is an **ongoing process**

- > Some of the things from your brain dump will obviously recur
- > Some of it you'll recognise organically
  - The third time you do something, **consider a recurring task**
- > Start slow – you'll learn what good recurrence looks like for you

# Put your life on **autopilot**

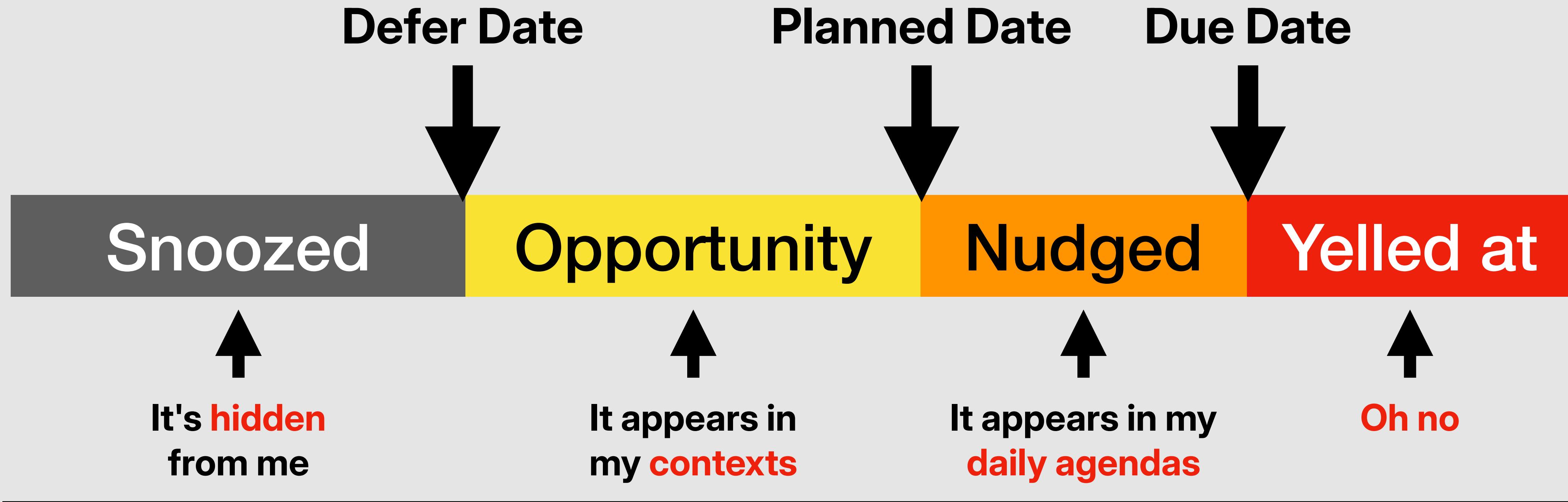
- > I don't like thinking "**How long has it been since I...**"
  - Changed my bedsheets, cleaned the shower
- > I really don't like when it's **been too long since I...**
  - Took out the kitchen rubbish 
- > I like being reminded I **could** update my CV after a year

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# I ❤️ the OmniFocus model of recurrence

- > A task/project *may have any of three different date properties*
  - **Defer:** Snoozed/hidden until this date
  - **Planned:** Pops onto your daily agenda from this date
  - **Due:** Yells at you (just say no to due dates)
- > A task/project *may have recurrence*
  - **Regularly:** Repeats the three timers like clockwork
  - **From completion:** Restarts the three timers upon completion

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You don't need to use all of the dates  
(You should almost never use Due Date anyway)

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# Repeat from completion



Doesn't lock you in to keeping up with a schedule  
When you complete something, you'll get invited to do it again soon

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# Some of my recurring tasks

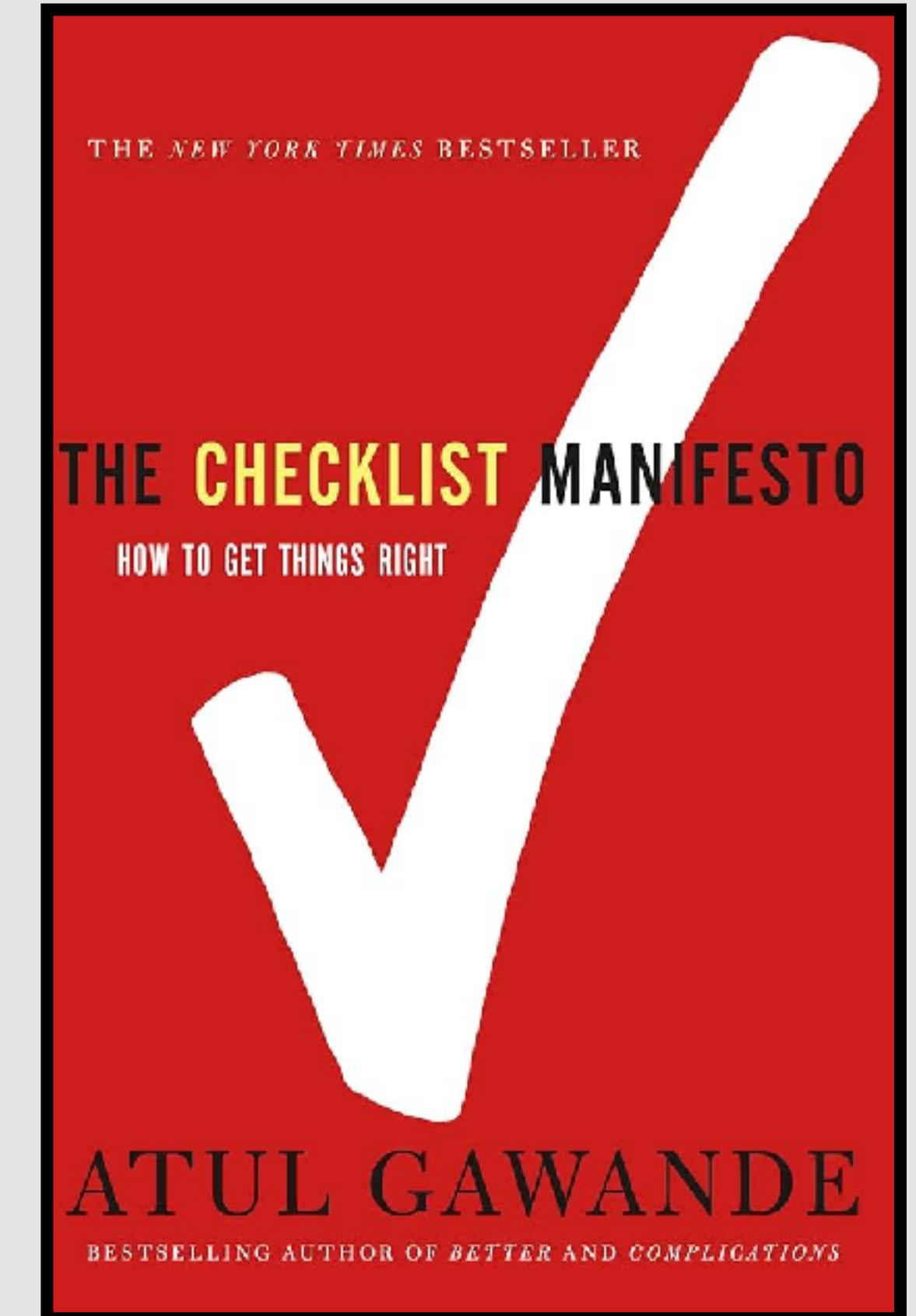
- > **Prepare monthly TantoSec research report**
  - Recurs like clockwork. Defer hides it until end of month, planned pops it onto my daily agenda. No due date. It gets done when it gets done.
- > **Clean washing machine**
  - Recurs 6 months from completion. Is an entire step-by-step project so I don't have to Google "how to clean washing machine" ever again.

# Some of my recurring tasks

- > **Change bedsheets**
  - Recurs from completion. Defer hides it while it would be silly to change them again, planned pops it onto my daily agenda.
  
- > **Take kitchen rubbish out**
  - Recurs from completion. Has defer, planned and **due date** because rubbish gets stinky.

# Checklists/Templates

- > For things that recur irregularly, write a template
- > My **tax time** is slightly less of a pain
- > My **packing list** is finely tuned
  - It also has stuff I like to do before I leave for a trip
  - No more "*did I turn the stove off?*"



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# A load off my mind 😊

- > I get invited to do things that I'd **forget to do or worry about having done**
  - I delete recurring tasks/projects when they no longer serve me
  - I tweak recurrence periods according to vibe
- > Don't let anyone tell you "**you shouldn't need reminders for that**"
  - Do what makes you happier, calmer, more in control
  - There is no "should" or "shouldn't" ❤️

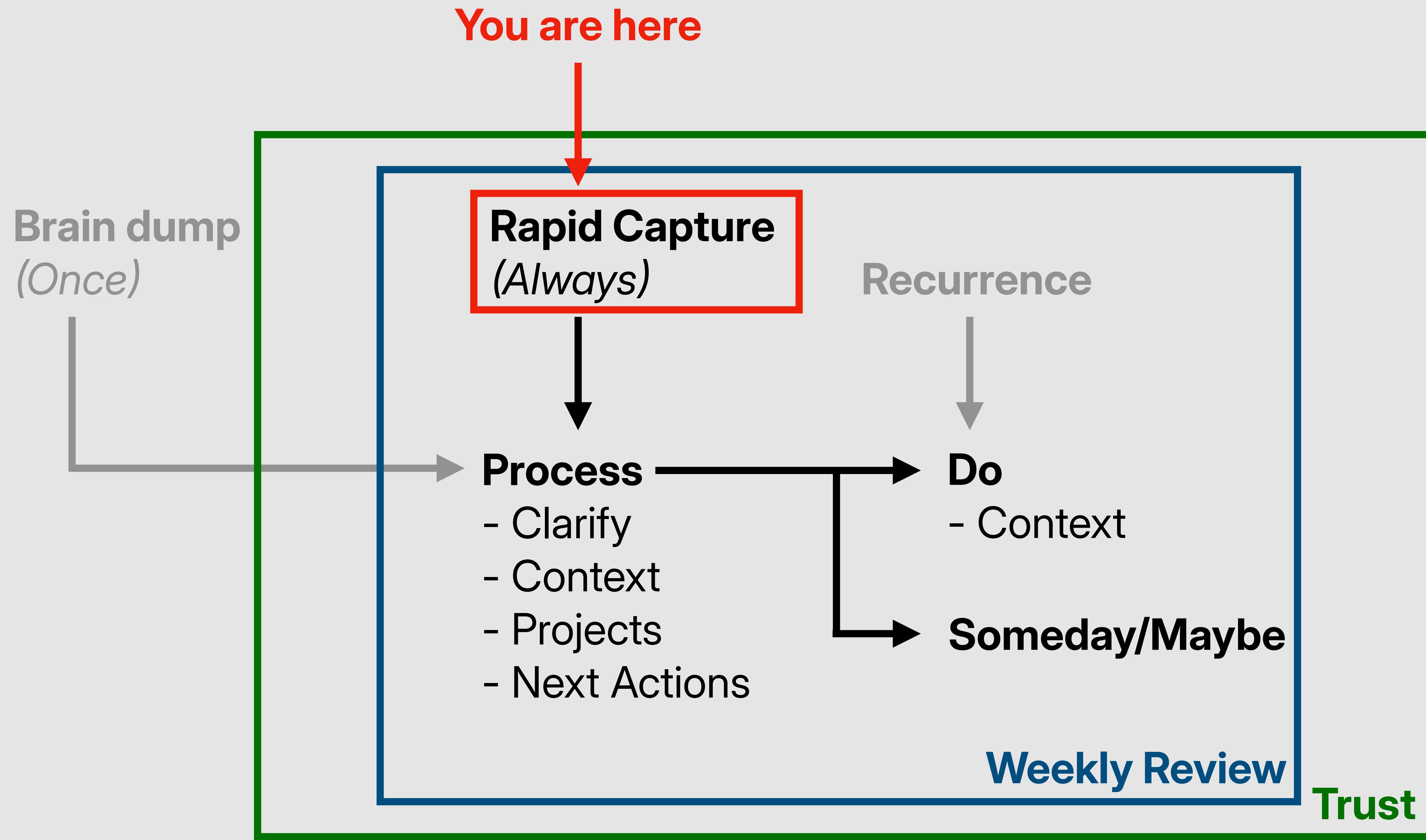
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**Set up recurring tasks and projects**

**Rapid Capture**

**Someday/Maybe**

>>>



# The GTD Inbox

- > Most apps create new tasks in an "Inbox" list of some sort
  - Dump stuff in here **very often** using "**rapid capture**"
- > Have a thought or agree to do something → capture it
- > Think of a great gift idea → capture it
- > Get an email you can't handle within 2 minutes → capture it
- > "I think you'd really enjoy" say no more I am already capturing it

# Make it **stupid** easy to do

- > **Make it take just 10 seconds**
  - Computer: Keyboard shortcut
  - Phone: Lock screen widget, or "hey Siri remind me to..."
- > **If it takes longer than 10 seconds then you won't do it**

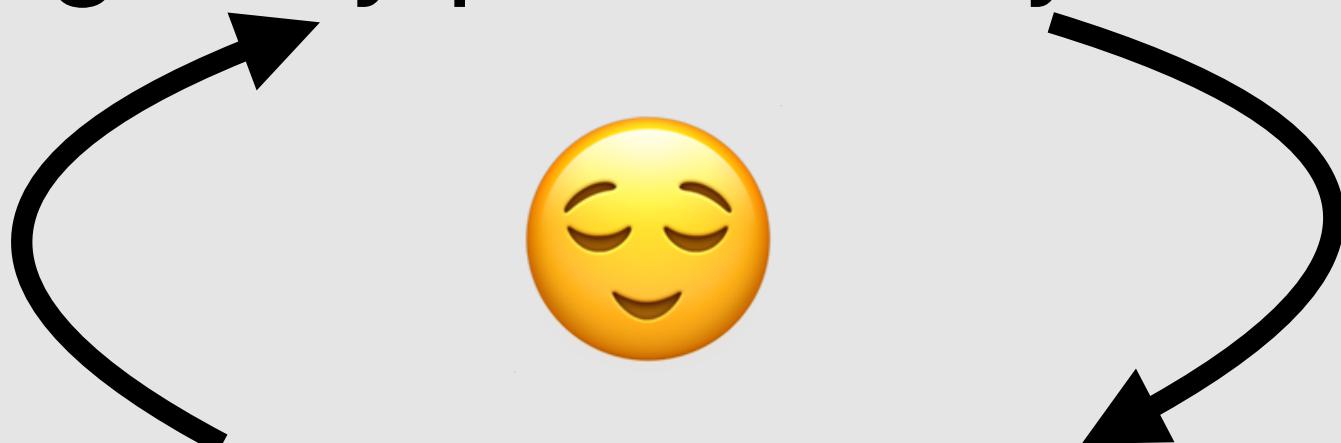
# Make it stupid easy for yourself

- > Stuff in the inbox **doesn't have to be perfect**
  - It doesn't have to be actionable yet
  - It doesn't need a context tag yet
  - It can be vague, it can have typos, you'll see it soon anyway
- > If you make it hard for yourself then **you won't do it**
- > **Spam the hell out of your Inbox** as long as you process it regularly

# Regularly process your Inbox

- > A few times a day
- > Two minute rule OR spin up a project OR make it actionable and tag it
- > Builds **trust** in your system

I regularly process my inbox



I capture to my inbox  
knowing I'll see it soon

I rarely process my inbox



I don't capture to my inbox because I  
don't trust that I'll see it soon

&gt;&gt;&gt;

# Processing needs to be perfect

- > If you let something leak into your system:
  - Without a **context**; or
  - Without being clarified as **actionable**; or
  - As a task when it's a **project in disguise**
- > It can **poison the system**
  - You won't engage with it, it won't get done, you'll **lose trust**



Rapid Capture  
Someday/Maybe  
Get Things Done

>>>

# Move stuff to **Someday/Maybe**

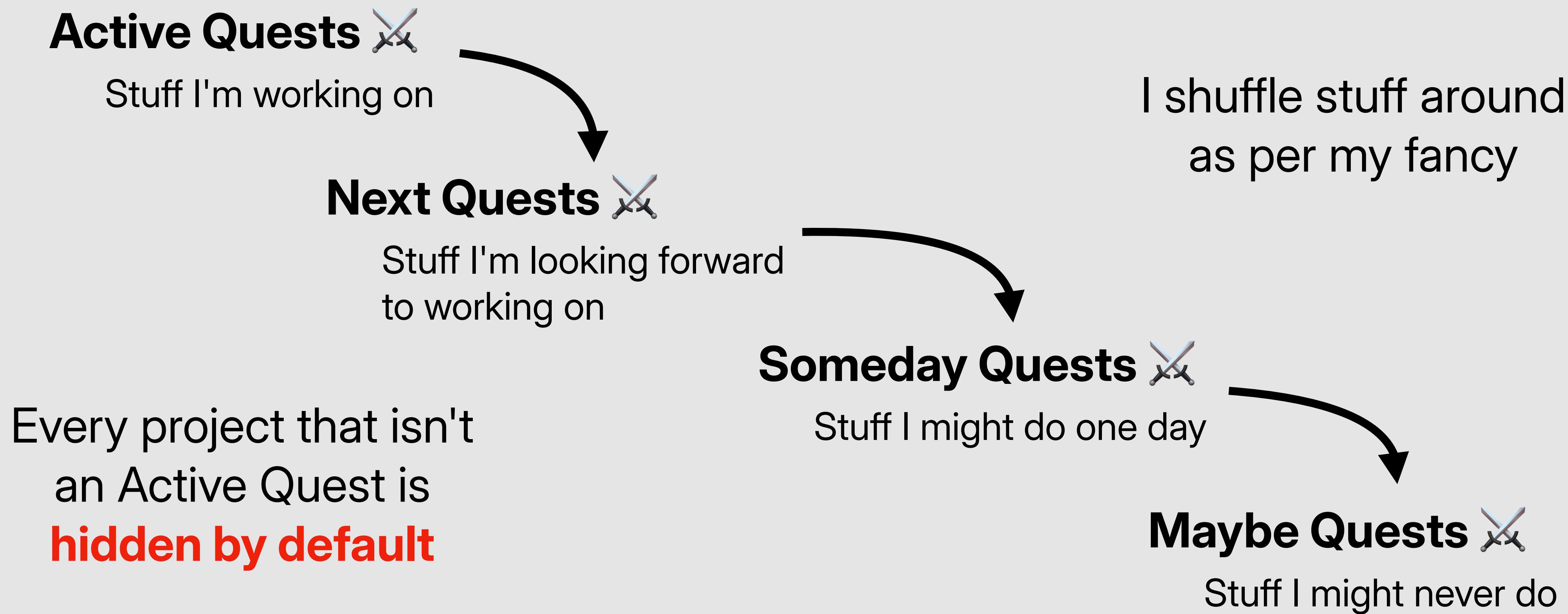
- > **Look for stuff that's not aligned with:**
  - Your current interests
  - Your current priorities
- > **Tag it as "Someday/Maybe" to put it on hold**

*"You can do anything, but you can't do everything"*

*David Allen*

>>>

# I choose to **structure** my Someday/Maybe



Calling them "Quests" makes me feel whimsical 😊

&gt;&gt;&gt;

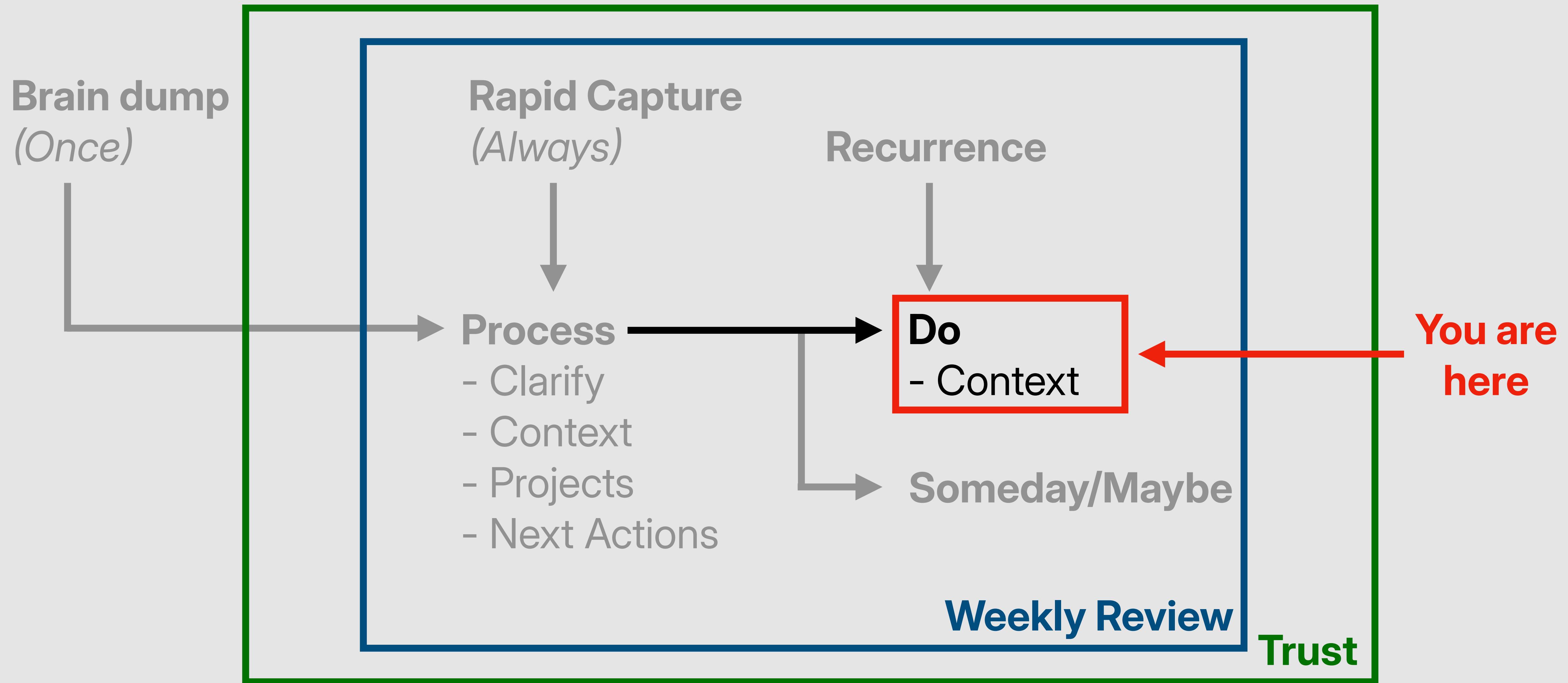
# I have **125 projects** in Someday/Maybe

- > I'm completely unbothered by them
  - They don't show up in my contexts
  - I reflect on them periodically
  - I know I can activate them when the time is right
  - Knowing they're captured **keeps them off my mind**

Someday/Maybe  
Get Things Done

Do weekly reviews

>>>



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# Do stuff

- > Terrible news: Your system won't do the work for you
- > Amazing news: Past you has taken the time to:
  - Crisply define things in an **actionable way**
  - Tag things with the **contexts** in which you can do them
  - Flesh out **projects** with **next actions** that will move things forwards
- > Everything in your system is achievable, or is hidden away anyway

# Filter by **context** and get to doing

- > At home → pop open the **home context** and change your sheets
- > On the computer → check out **computer** and write that **cover letter**
- > Heading out to walk the dog → filter for **Out and About** before you go
  - You should post that letter, it's in the top desk drawer
  - If the cafe is open you can finally **get those damn coffee beans**

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# Exploit your time confetti

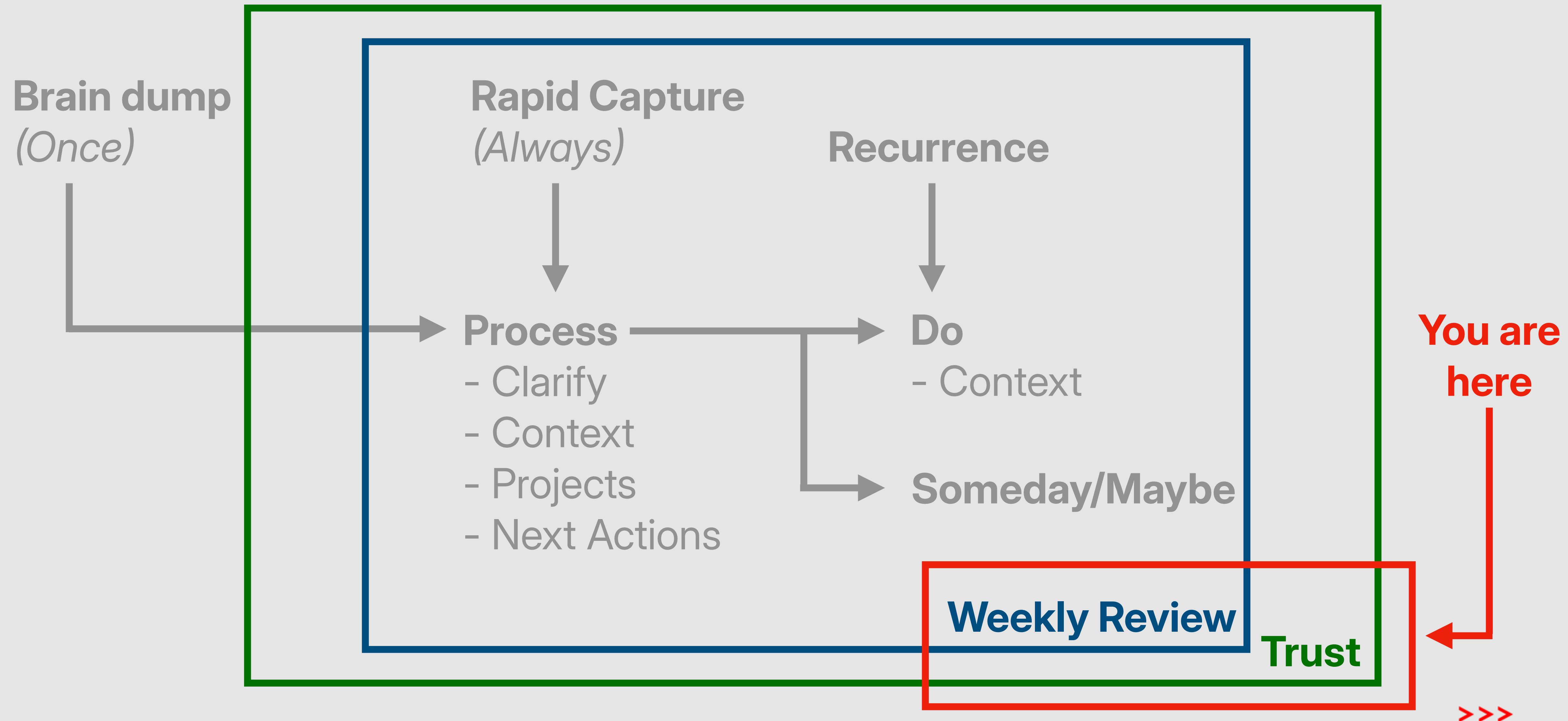
- > Waiting in line at the food truck → maybe check your phone context
  - Order dog food from Amazon
  - Listen to that band your friend told you about
    - If it's your vibe then pick up a ticket to the show
      - The URL is in the notes field - thanks past you 🙏
  - Or just enjoy being present at the food truck! That's okay too ❤️

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**Get Things Done**  
**Do weekly reviews**

**Trust**

>>>



# Do your **weekly reviews**

- > **30-60 minutes, once a week**
- > **Builds and maintains trust in your system**
- > **Capture → Process → Scan → Fix**
  - **Tip: Create a recurring project to drive your weekly reviews**
  - **But if you put a due date on it then I will be so mad**

*"Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe"*

*Abraham Lincoln*

>>>

# Weekly review – capture

- > Scan your mind for things you haven't captured
- > Scan your environments for clutter-as-reminders
- > Scan your calendar for things that are coming up
- > Zero your email inbox
  - Remember the two minute rule → just capture, archive the mail and move on

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# Weekly review – capture

- > I'll **record a voice memo** and talk things through
  - Hard problems, big dreams, gnarly things that have been too tricky to capture
- > I use an Apple Shortcut to transcribe it with **Whisper** and put it in my Inbox
- > I can then study the transcript and write **crisp, actionable tasks**

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# Weekly review – process

- > **Zero your GTD Inbox**
  - Clarify as actionable
  - Tag with context
  - Spin out as projects and add next actions

>>>

# Weekly review – scan your system

- > Audit your active projects and your tags
- > Look for things that have stalled
- > Consider activating someday/maybe stuff

>>>

# Weekly review – fix broken stuff

- > Its **contexts** are incorrect → add what's missing
- > It is not **actionable** → clarify or decompose it
  - Perhaps it's a project in disguise?
- > It is not aligned with **current priorities** → move it to Someday/Maybe
- > It's tagged Waiting For and you're **blocked by someone** → ping them

Do weekly reviews

Trust

Start trusting your calendar

>>>

# Distrust is a vicious cycle

- > Your system only works if you **trust that it works**
- > It only works if you **follow the process** and **engage with it regularly**
- > Certain behaviours **cascade** into other behaviours
- > I am always inventing **new and exciting ways** to break my system 😢

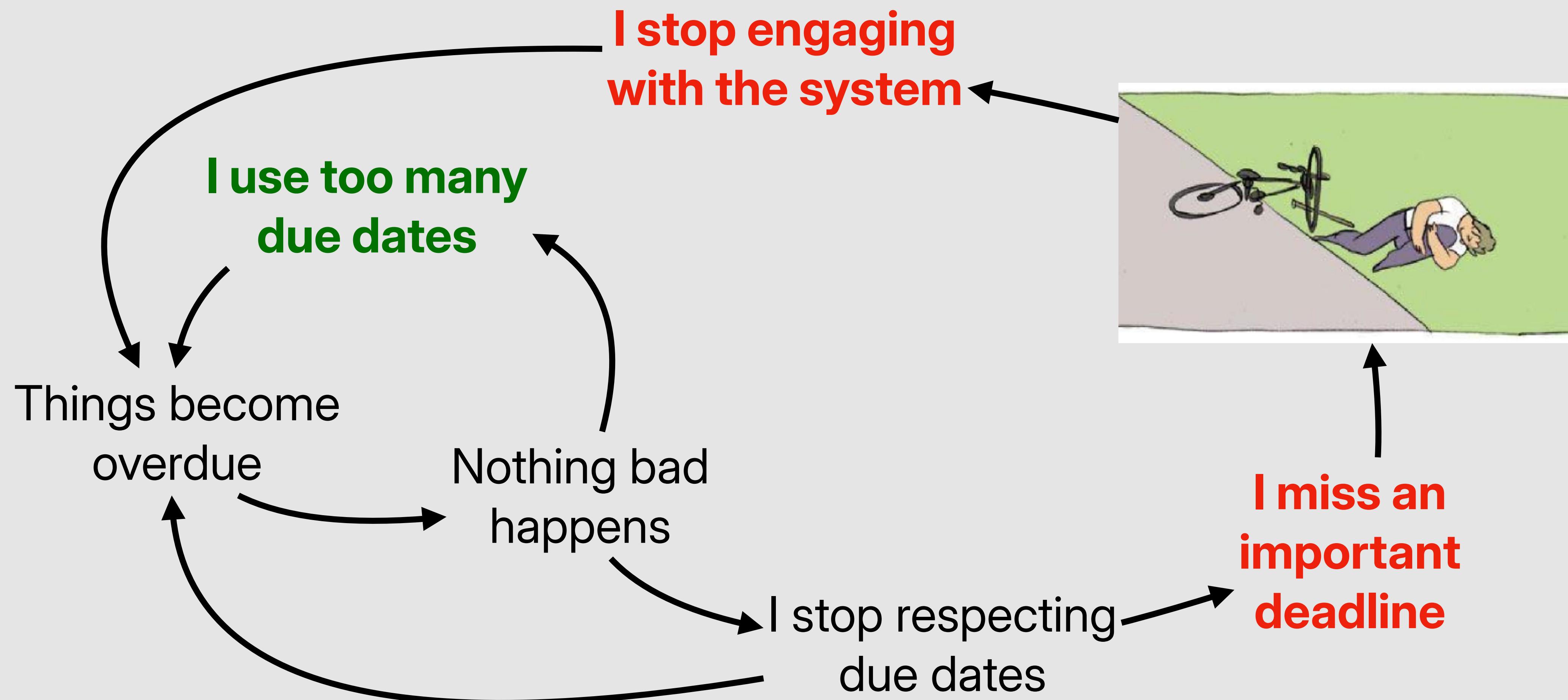


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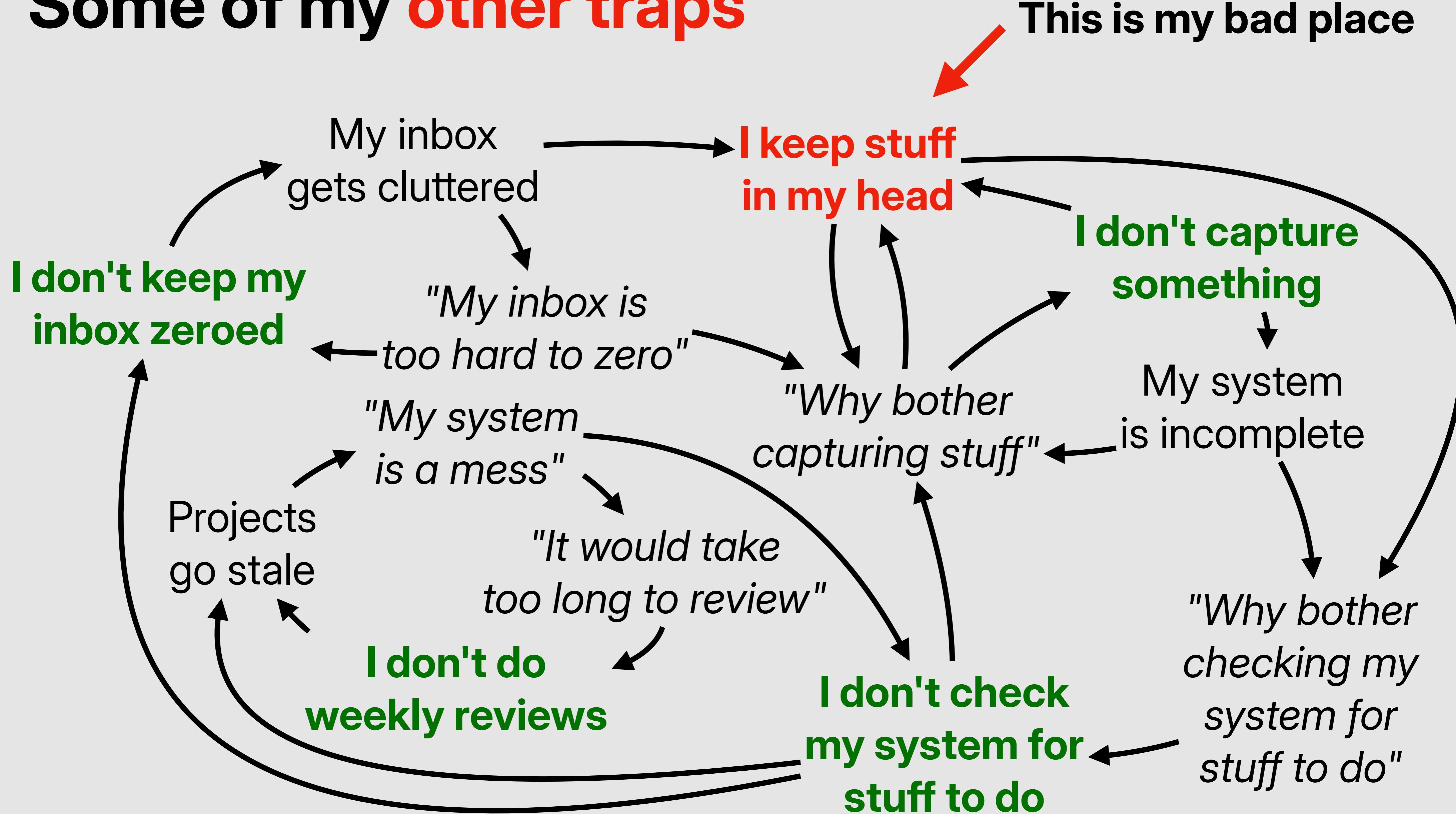
# Make your system **canonical**

- > **Avoid having multiple systems and multiple inboxes (IMO)**
  - **Fragmentation can cause distrust**
    - Stop using your mailbox as a TODO list
    - If you jot down a note, move it to your Inbox ASAP
  - But be mindful of corpo data security policies 😊
- > **David Allen said it's okay to have multiple systems because pen and paper**
  - IMO with phones and cloud synchronisation you can have a **trusted and unified** system

# Misuse of due dates



# Some of my other traps



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# Distrust is a **canon** event

- > I often fall out of trust with my system
- > I know that I'm **better with my system than without**
  - I'll sit with my system for a few hours to fix what's broken and remove the **damn due dates**



*You should review your system for one hour every week*

*Unless you're too busy, then you should review it for three hours*

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Trust  
**Start trusting your calendar**

>>>

# Stop misusing your calendar

- > Calendars **seem intuitive**
- > I was never taught how to use one
- > It's easy to put things on there that **shouldn't be on there**



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# Your calendar

- > For your **hard landscape**
- > Events that are fixed in time
  - Be there or miss out entirely
- > Appointments, meetings, flights, birthdays, holidays

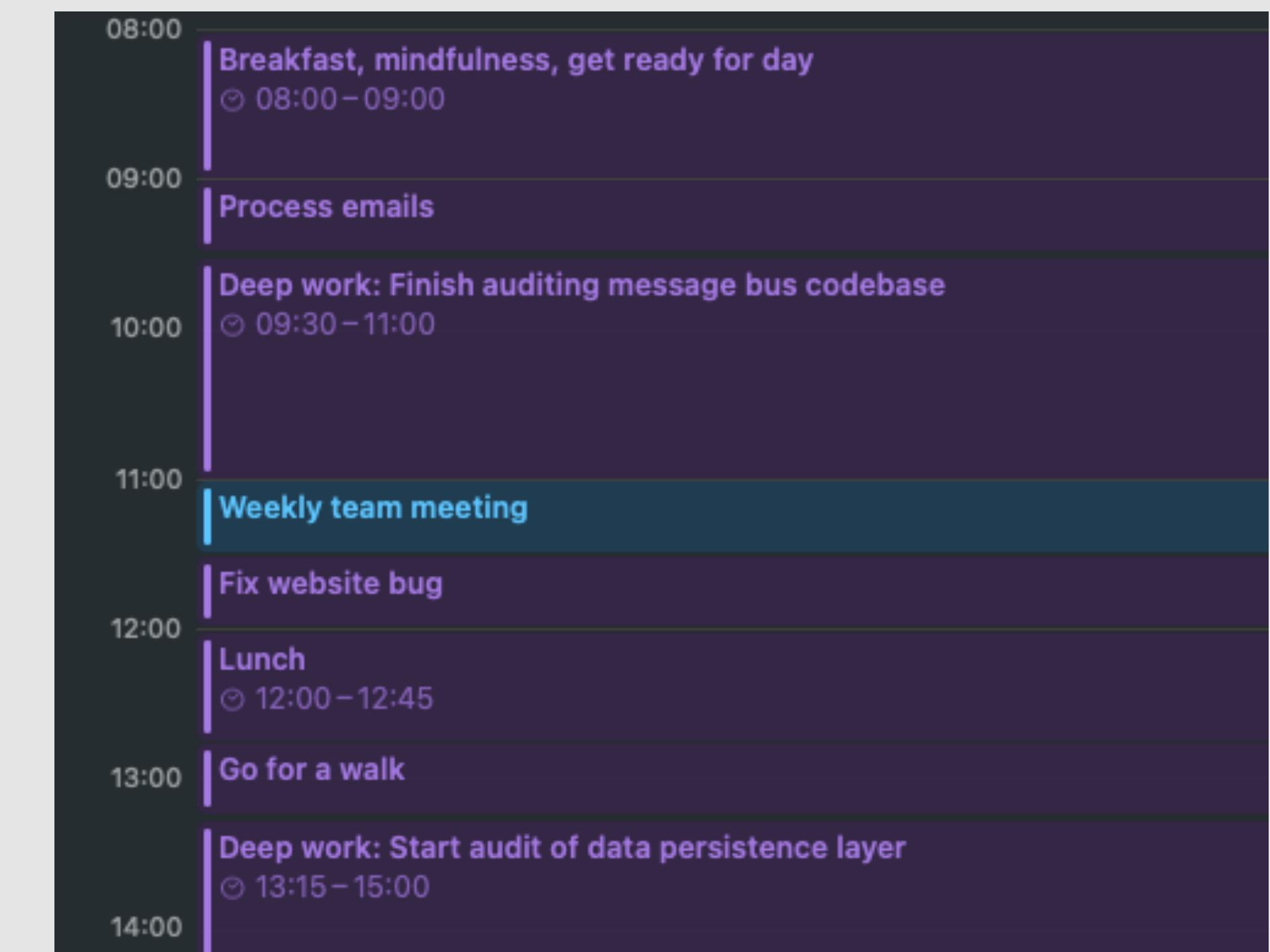
# Your system

- > For things you can **do**
- Booking an appointment, planning for a meeting
- Buying a birthday gift and calling your loved ones
- The calendar event is not what reminds you to buy the gift

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# What about time boxing?

- > It doesn't work for me, I know the guy who put them there and he's full of it
- > I don't respect the time boxes and then I need to spend time reshuffling them
- > I stop trusting my calendar
- > I start missing appointments



My system is responsible for telling me what I could work on

>>>

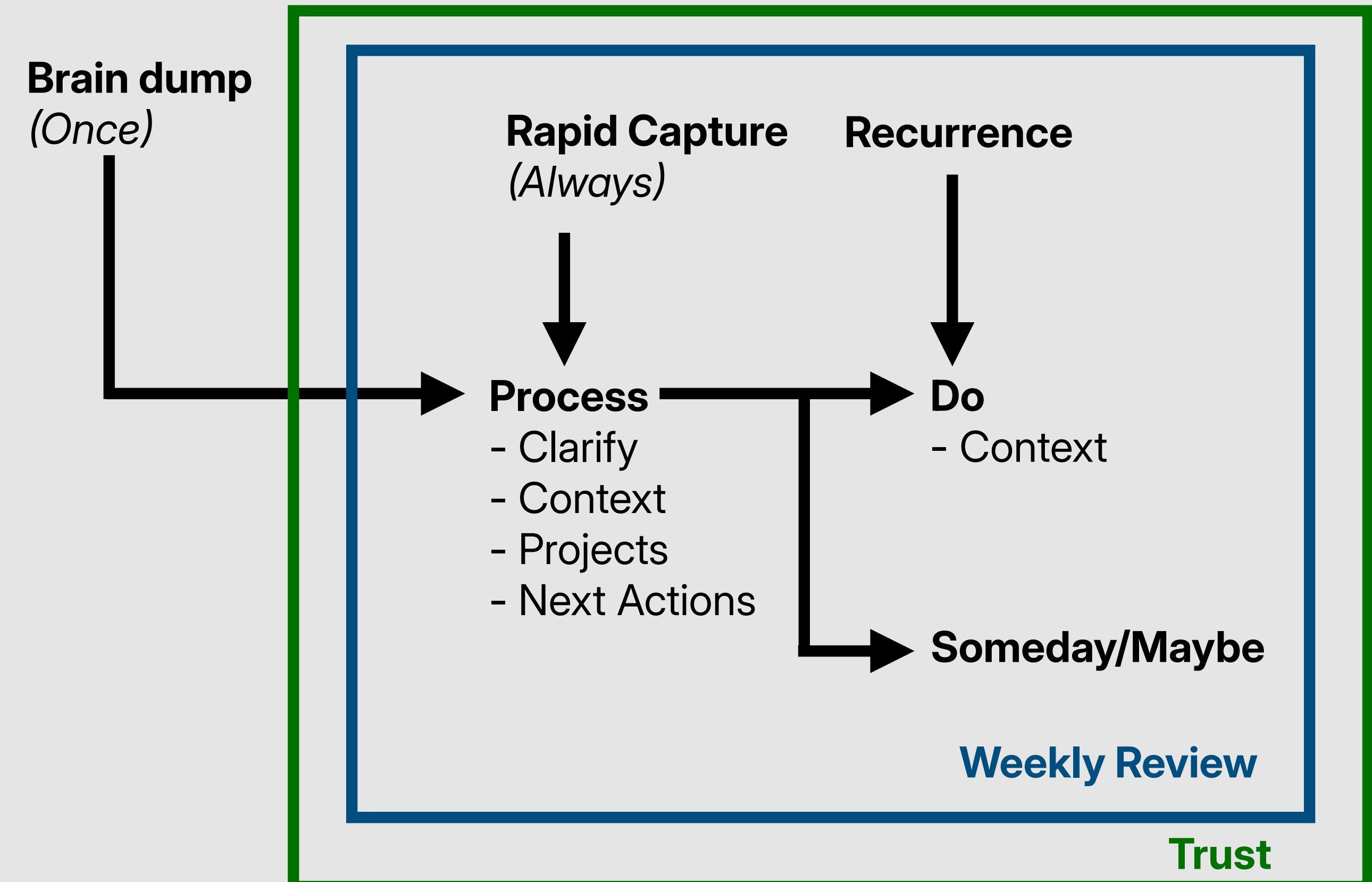
# How to get started

>>>

# Get started

## 1. Choose an app\*

- I like **OmniFocus**
- \$230 and Apple-only 😔
- Many people like **Todoist**
- Not E2EE though 💀
- Be careful with **Notion**  
It gets complicated fast  
It isn't great at rapid capture IMO



\* Or try what came with your phone >>>  
Or try pen and paper!

# Get started

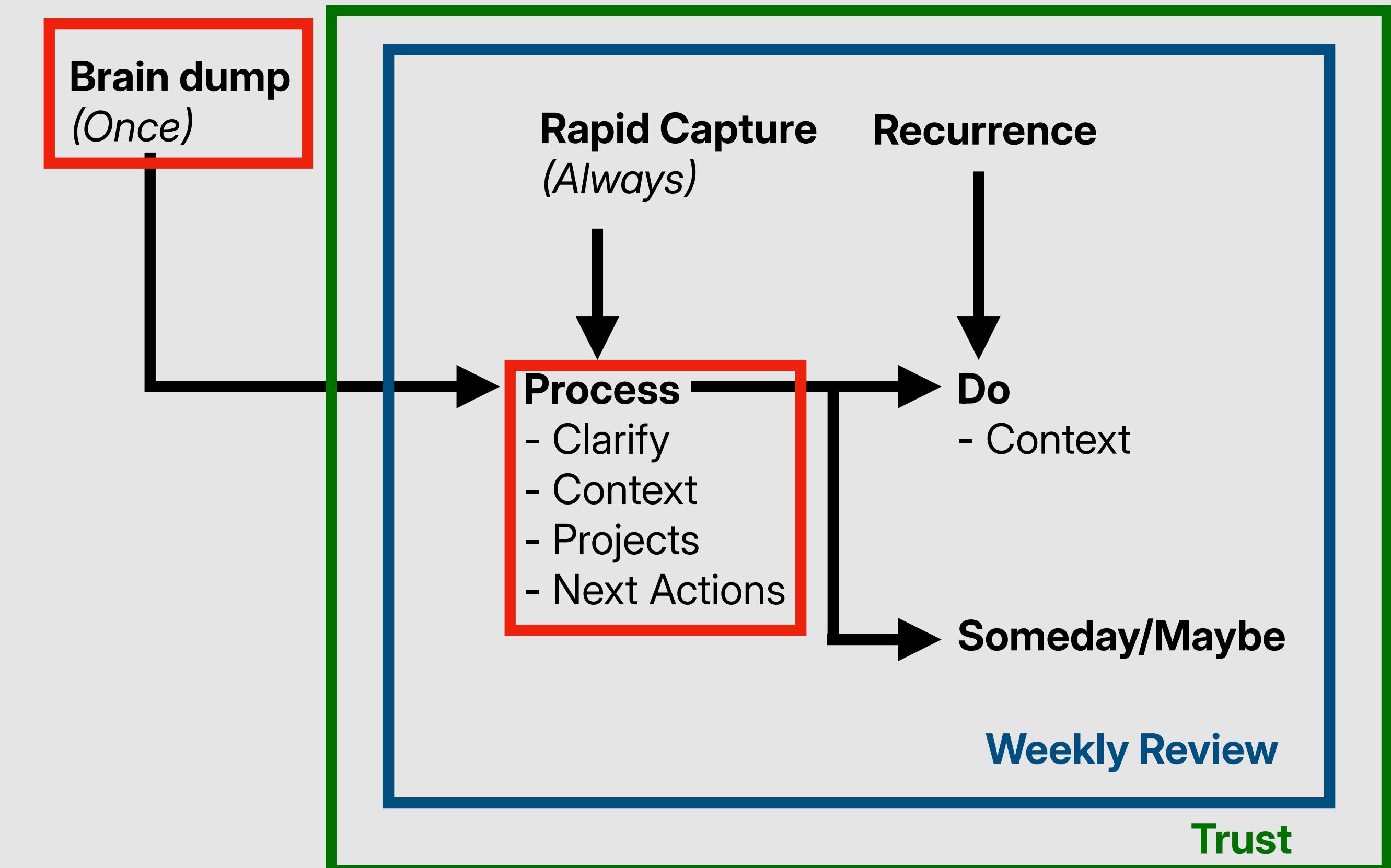
## 2. Do a brain dump (actually)

## 3. Process the brain dump

- Clarify, context

- Projects, next actions

## 4. Don't use due dates



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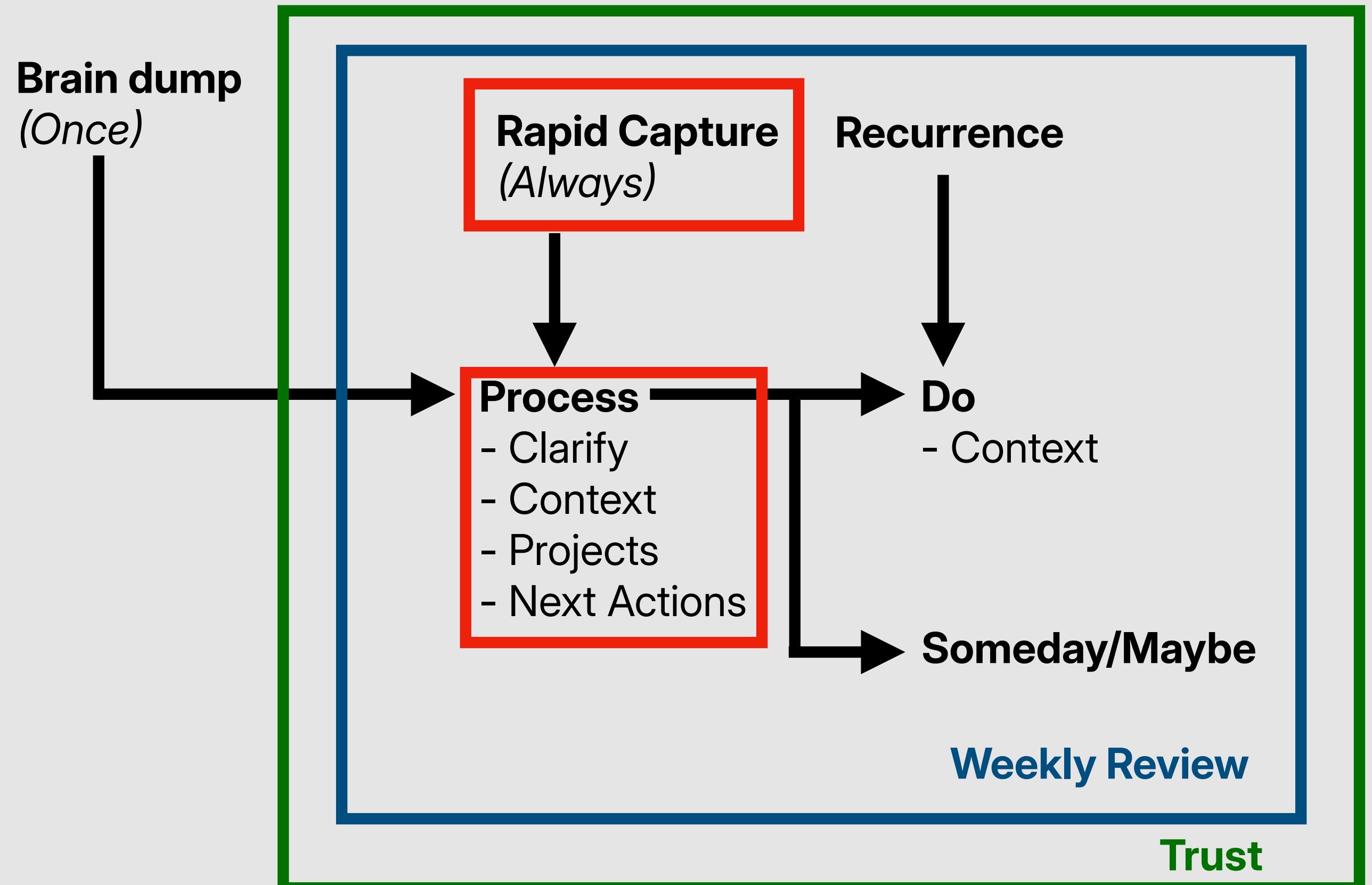
# Get started

## 5. Rapid capture

- Two minute rule

## 6. Process the inbox

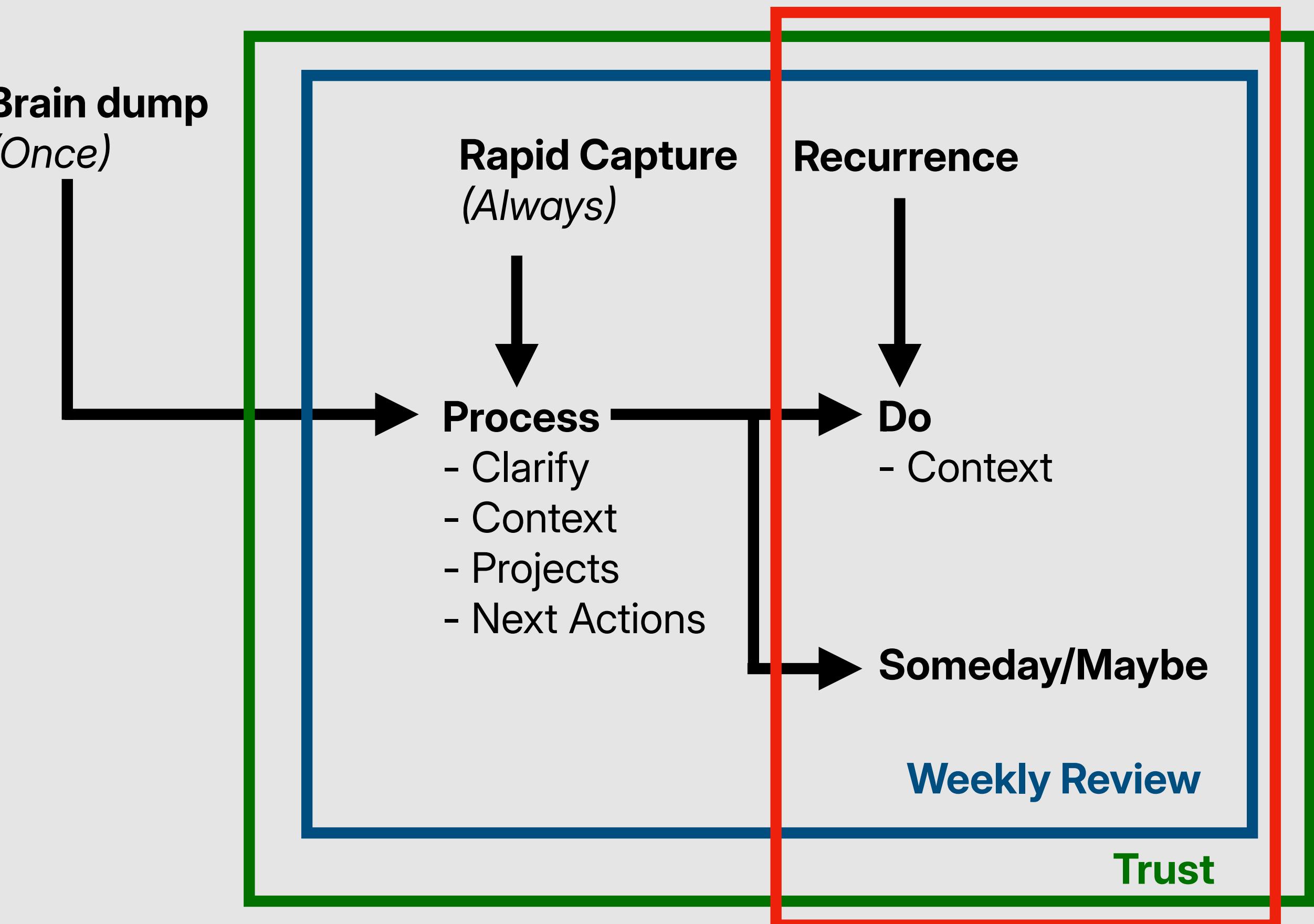
- Clarify, context
- Projects, next actions



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# Get started

7. **Someday/Maybe**
8. **Set up recurrence**
9. **Get things done** 💪
  - Context, time confetti
10. **Weekly review**
11. **Maintain trust**



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# Find out more

- > "Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity" by David Allen
  - \$20 on Amazon (paperback and Kindle) or \$0 at your local library
  - I've probably made David Allen sad but my way of doing GTD works for me
- > Look for blog posts, YouTube videos, short-form videos
  - Tip: Search for "getting things done david allen" to avoid generic nonsense
- > Read "top all time" on reddit.com/r/gtd

Help is available – talk to your GP  
You deserve to be happy and healthy ❤

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# Thank you

[tantosec.com](http://tantosec.com)



>>>

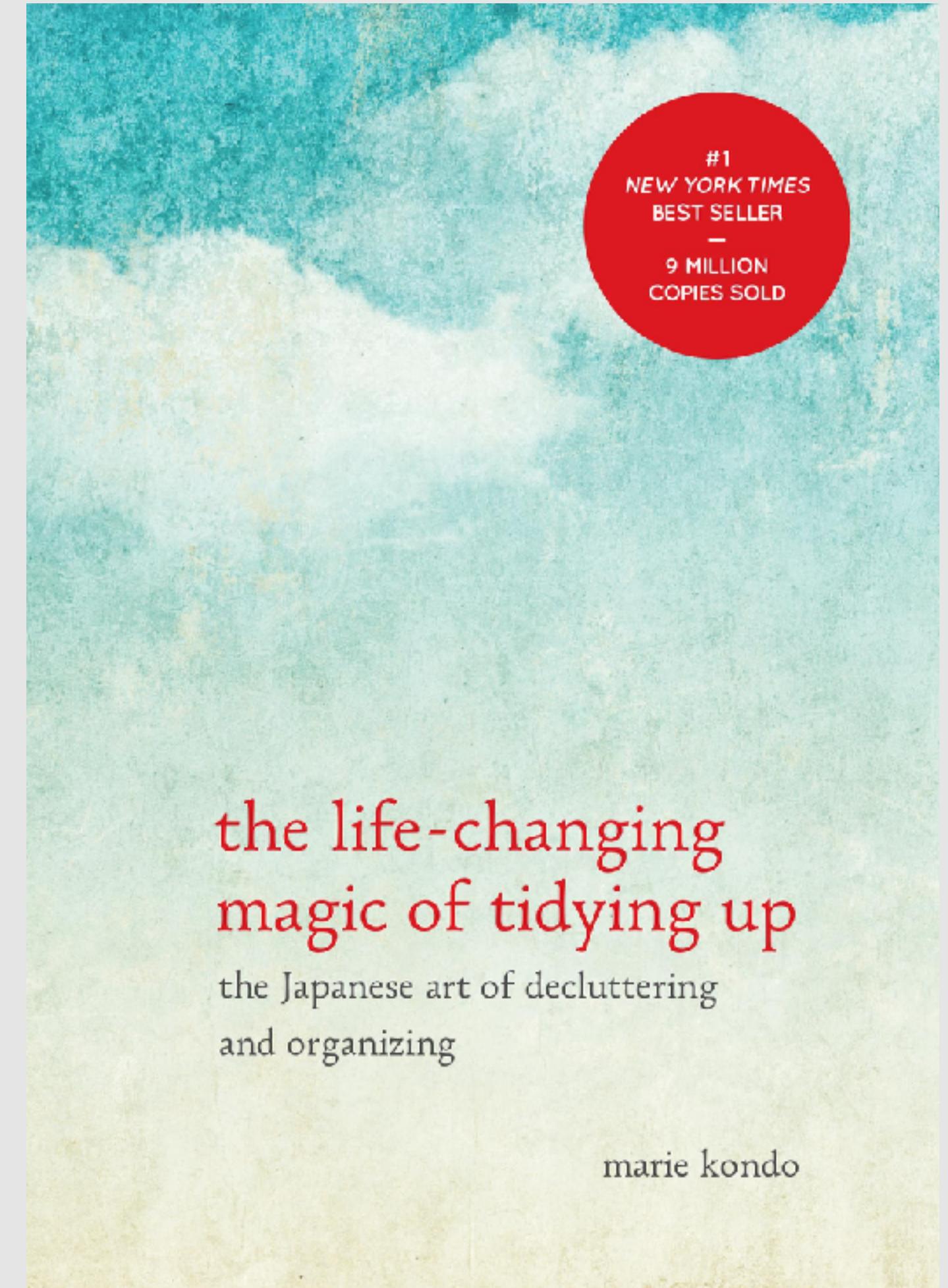
# Bonus material

Stuff I had to cut for time or wasn't quite vibing with  
Here be dragons

>>>

# Tidy space, tidy mind 😊

- > **Don't use physical things as reminders to do something**
  - 2 minute rule, or Rapid Capture and put it away
- > **Your workspace is for doing work - not for holding things that remind you of other work**
- > **Your living space is for living - not for holding things that compete for your attention**



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# Single-tasking

- > Multi-tasking doesn't work for me
- > I find I do more and better work when I focus on one thing at a time
- > Protect unbroken blocks of time and use them effectively
- > "Never half-ass two things, whole-ass one thing" –Ron Swanson

## DEEP WORK

'Cal Newport is a clear voice in a sea of noise,  
bringing science and passion in equal measure'  
Seth Godin, author of *Linchpin*



Author of *So Good They Can't Ignore You*

>>>

# Warren Buffett's three-step advice

1. Write down your **top 25 life goals**
2. Circle your **top 5 goals**
3. The other 20 goals are your "**avoid at all costs**" list until you achieve the circled goals



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# Pomodoro Technique

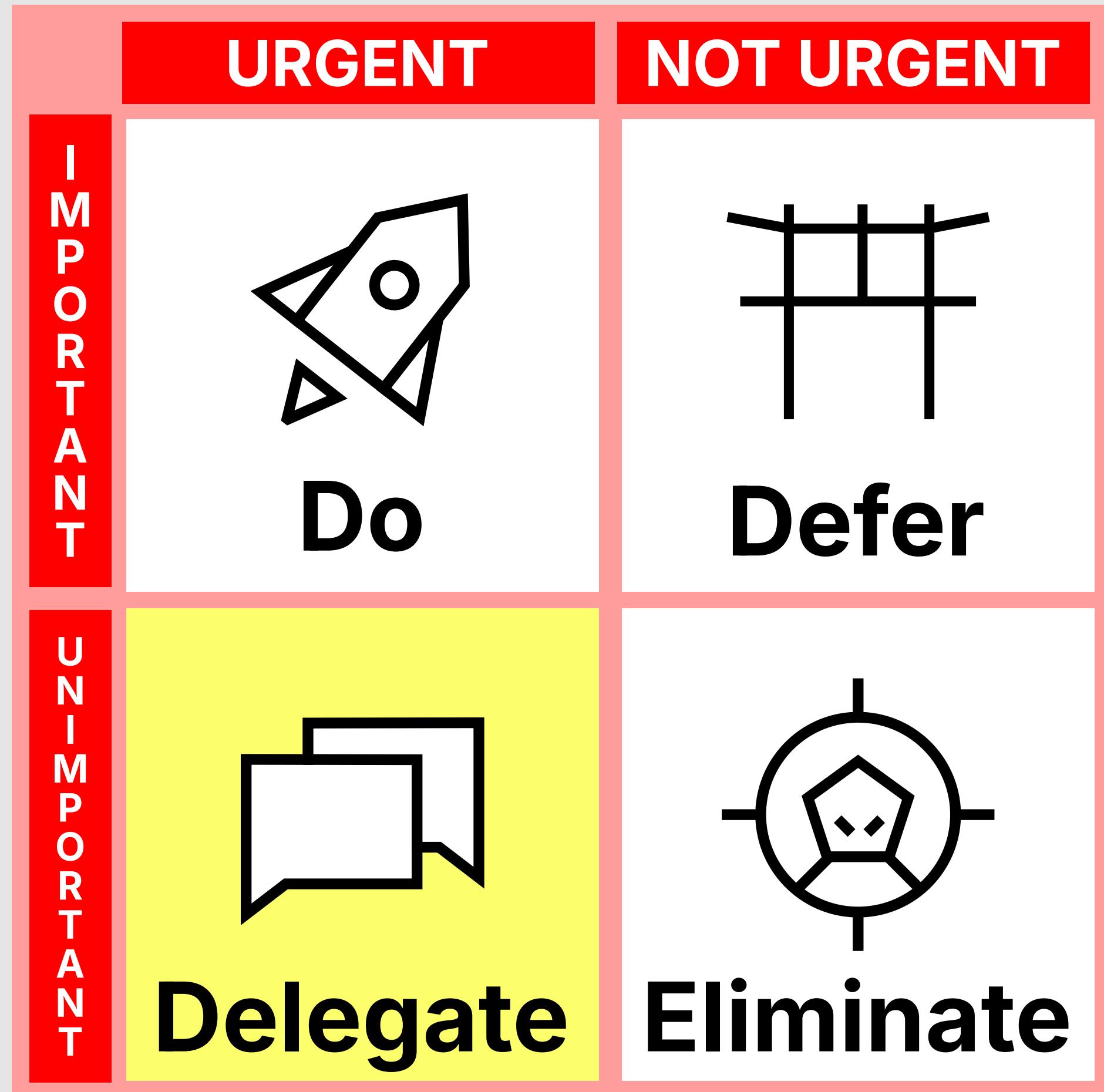
- > 25 minutes of work, 5 minute break
- > After 2 hours, take a 30 minute break
- > Repeat



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# Eisenhower Matrix

- > Urgent tasks are **time sensitive**
- > Important tasks align with your **values**
- > Urgent yet unimportant tasks are a trap
- > When everything is important, nothing is
- > Consider using **tagging** to reflect important/urgent, or just use it as a mental framework



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# Beware the trap

- > **At some point, tweaking your approach to productivity consumes all the time that you have for work**
- > **You still have to do the work**
- > **Find what works for you and stick with it**

# Don't try to brute force an unsustainable cadence

- > **The only solution to overwork is delegation or renegotiation**
- > **"You can do anything, but not everything" –David Allen**
- > **We all only have 24 hours in a day**
- > **You have a finite capacity, you're not a machine**
- > **Your work isn't worth burning out for**

I forgot I had moved this to the secondary deck 💀 I wish I had included it

>>>

	Pen and Paper	Text File	App
Portability	You need to carry it around 😞	Stuck on your PC ✗ Unless you sync it ☁	Natively on your phone and PC ✓
Accessibility	No batteries or WiFi needed ✓	Needs batteries Can be awkward on phone ✗ Laptops are cumbersome ✗	Needs batteries Phones are handy ✓
Structure	Sketch and doodle ✓ BYO structure 🤔	Jot down whatever ✓ BYO structure 🤔	Well structured ✓ Could be inhibiting ✗
Backups	Not really ✗	✓	✓
Quality of Life	Tactile ✓ Hard to search ✗ Can't filter ✗	Copy and paste ✓ Search: Ctrl-F ✓ Filter: grep? 🤔	Purpose-built functionality ✓ ✓ ✓
Notifications	✗	✗	✓
Automation	✗	DIY? 🤔	Probably an API ✓
Price	Just steal it from work	\$0	Varies

# Hybrid approaches

- > **Should you mix and match?**
  - Keep a text file on your work computer and a different one at home?
  - Use an app, but have a notebook to jot stuff down?
- > **Using multiple methodologies can be flexible**

# The downsides

- > Disjoint methodologies can get **out of sync**
  - *"Where did I put that task again?"*
  - *"I feel like I'm forgetting something important"*
- > It can cause you to **not trust** your system
- > Use hybrid methodologies with **caution and discipline**
  - e.g. move tasks from a notebook to a canonical trusted system ASAP

	OmniFocus Standard	OmniFocus Pro	Todoist	TickTick	Whatever came with your phone
Platform	Apple only ✗	Apple only ✗	Everywhere ✓	Everywhere ✓	Your phone
Capture	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tag	✓	✓	✓	✓	?
Due date	✓	✓	✓	✓	Probably
Do Date	✓	✓	✗	✗	Unlikely
Defer date	✓	✓	✗	✗	Unlikely
Repetition	✓	✓	✓	✓	Probably
Filter	✗	✓	✓	✓	?
Automation	✗	Native JavaScript	API	API	?
End to End Encryption	✓	✓	✗	✗	?
Free Trial		14 days	Limited free version	Limited free version	N/A
Price	\$120 once	\$230 once OR ~\$155 per year	\$8 per month OR \$6 per month annually	\$6 per month OR \$5 per month annually	\$0

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# What I like about OmniFocus

- > Supports **defer dates** and **planned dates**
- > Supports parallel vs. sequential **projects** and **indented tasks**
- > Supports **filtering** via Perspectives (Pro version only)
- > Has a **JavaScript engine** for automation and plugins (Pro version only)
- > It has **free cloud sync** with **End to End Encryption (E2EE)**
  - Tip: Use an E2EE passphrase that is distinct from your sync passphrase!

# What I don't like about OmniFocus

- > It's **Apple only** (macOS, iOS, iPadOS)
- > It's quite **expensive** 😞
  - It has been worth every penny, to me

# What I don't like about OmniFocus

- > Standard: \$120 AUD once
- > Pro: \$230 AUD once or \$100 USD per year (~\$155 AUD per year)
  - Pro has **Perspectives** (filtering) and a **JavaScript engine** (automation/plugins)
- > One-off purchases are for life but are locked to a major release
  - Current version is OmniFocus 4, released December 2023
  - New major release every 4-5 years, upgrades cost ~50% of a full license