

GTD Mind Sweep Trigger List

aka Mental Collection

The GTD method has a few simple goals, one of which is capturing every thought, idea, to do, etc. so that you don't have to think about it - or more accurately, remember it – again. Then you put it in a trusted place where you'll see it when it's appropriate. The goal of the mental collection often called a 'mind sweep' or 'brain dump' is to get those items lingering out of your mind and into a big list so then you can appropriately figure out what to do with all of it without worrying you forgot something. This often also acts a bit like brainstorming where the 'trigger' phrases will often spring up new ideas or answers to problems that have been bugging you.

The below list is used both during implementation and when regularly practicing GTD. This is not the complete list, even within each mini-area like 'Commitments/promises to others' shown in the book and guides. Our group uses the full list since we all own the book, but the snippets here should be enough to give you an idea of what is in there. In purple at the bottom I list some additional items as an example of what we do in our group's document that add triggers for each specific person - see the goals document for more info here: <http://bit.ly/srGTDgg>

Selections From The Base Trigger List From GTD Book and Guides

Professional Section:

- Projects started, not completed
- Projects that need to be started
- Commitments/promises to others
 - Boss/partners
 - Colleagues
 - Subordinates
- Communications to make/get
 - Internal/External
 - Initiate or respond to:
 - Voicemail
 - E-mail
 - Letters
 - Memos
- Other writing to finish/submit
 - Reports
 - Evaluations/reviews
 - Proposals
- Meetings that need to be set/requested

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- Who needs to know about what decisions?
- Financial
 - Cash flow
 - Budgets
- Planning/organizing
 - Formal planning (goals, targets, objectives)
 - Current projects (next stages)
 - Upcoming projects
 - Organizational initiatives
- Customers
 - Internal
 - External
- Systems
 - Phones
 - Computers
 - Office equipment
 - Filing
- Waiting for...
 - Information
 - Delegated tasks/projects
 - Completions critical to projects
- Professional development
 - Training/seminars
 - Things to learn
 - Things to look up
- Professional wardrobe

Personal Section:

- Projects started, not completed
- Projects that need to be started
- Commitments/promises to others
 - Spouse/Partner
 - Children
 - Family
 - Friends
 - Borrowed items

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- Projects: other organizations
 - Service
 - Civic
 - Volunteer
- Upcoming events
 - Special occasions
 - Birthdays
 - Anniversaries
 - Holidays
 - Travel
 - Weekend trips
 - Vacations
- Administration
 - Financial
 - Bills
 - Banks
 - Investments
 - Loans
 - Taxes
 - Insurance
 - Legal affairs
 - Filing
- Health care
 - Doctors
 - Dentists
 - Specialists
- Hobbies
- Errands
 - Hardware store
 - Drugstore
 - Market
 - Bank
 - Cleaner
- Community
 - Neighborhood
 - Schools
 - Local government
- Civic issues

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Example Of Some Of Our Group's Individually Used Items

The below are examples of some items individuals in our group use as specific triggers for the different areas of their life and how we show it in the document. You'll notice that some of these may fit or seem similar to the above categories but they often are:

- a) worded differently - to accommodate the phrase that will best act as a trigger for that person, or
- b) get more specific/in-depth - e.g. someone may list the actual organizations they volunteer for to ensure they cover that item more thoroughly instead of just relying on the 'volunteer' term above.

Person A:

- Electronics projects
- Writing/Story ideas
- Career Path
- Coworkers
 - <listed specific teammates/coworkers to make sure no loose ends>
- Colleagues
- Friends
 - <listed specific friends here to make sure recurring stuff is taken care of>
- Family
 - <same as above>

Person B:

- Running/5ks
- Group Trips
- Driving

Person C:

- Mentees/Protégés
- Health Stuff - Not mentioned above
 - Meds/Supplements
 - Physical Therapy/Massage/Alternative Treatments
- Clients
 - <list of long-term clients here>
- Sherirubin.com