

Ready for Anything – Allen, David

Two levels to handle for any unforeseen opportunity: 1. The Spiritual; 2. All the rest. (4)

Get a ubiquitous idea-capturing tool used to record whenever they occur that is always with you. (5)

Stress comes from unkept agreements with yourself. (6)

Mastering workflow: collect, process, organize, review, and do. Each phased aspect of workflow should be done as separate activities. (7)

If you don't know the total current inventory of your work, you won't be fully aware of what you can't do. Your integrity will lead you into an infinite amount of new to-dos. When you consciously track all your commitments, that same integrity will force you to discriminate and say no, because you'll be more aware of your capabilities. (9)

Confront the freedom-versus-structure issue. It's playing the game with two basic moves – concentration and cooperation. Concentration is the key to power. Cooperation is the lubricant for the efficient flow of that energy. (10)

A map is not functional until you know where you are on it. You must have a reference point for what you want to maintain, accomplish, or experience. (12)

Start with the priority-driving stuff. One big reason we don't usually start that way is that it's almost impossible to focus on the bigger picture when a vast majority of your subliminal energy is wrapped around psychic “open loops” in your world. Learning to respond effectively and efficiently to everything that has hooked your attention is masterful behavior. (19) Response-ability. (20)

All your actions and projects have relative importance to you but only when they're consciously weighed against each other. Maintaining a complete, current, and reviewable inventory of all the open loops, no matter how big or small they are, is a prerequisite for setting trustworthy priorities. (21)

Too many personal-productivity disasters come from a lack of handling things of “secondary” importance – avoiding responsibility for managing many open loops that don't go away, just because they aren't a priority. Make a complete projects list, with no distinctions about priorities, time frame, or size. (21-22)

Unfulfilled commitments consume psychic fuel that is unavailable for other uses. (24)

Left only in the mind, these self-commitments create infinite loops that make no progress and produce inner conflict and stress. (27)

Don't make lists of actions and projects just to get them all done and then do nothing else in your life. You process the things you have attention on so you can do what you really feel like doing. (39)

Clarity is never found within something unclear. (43)

Putting your mind to something activates both the subject and the object of your thinking. (51)

Not *be* your best – *do* your best. Attempting to be the best can easily have struggle, ego and self-recrimination as baggage, with win/lose as a format. But doing your best is a dynamic, ever-changing experience that is possible anytime, by anyone. (57)

Ask yourself the “what’s best?” question, listen inwardly, and muster up the willingness to respond to the answer you get. (58)

If you want different results, a change of focus is required. Your brain has an in-built mechanism for finding patterns you’ve programmed because of where you’ve put your attention. (60)

How can you develop a personal system that fosters a life-and-workstyle that can consistently and easily be returned to “ready”? Can you surrender control at one level, in order to move quickly to the higher one? (61)

A change in focus equals a change in results. (63)

If I am managing the incompletions of my world because in truth I simply want to disengage from life, the stress never really goes away. (72)

I can’t wait to “finish” – so that I can go do something to escape from the whole process! But inevitably with that approach, defeatism creeps in: Why should I even start when there’s never any finish? When the fulfillment is present inside me and I’m okay with myself at the deepest level, it’s not about getting everything done. It’s just a process of doing – and a very conscious process at that. What am I doing now, and now, and now, and now...? (73)

A vision of a desired future – its value is not actually about achieving something in time, but rather about how it changes the substances and quality of the decisions you’re making in this moment. (78)

Are my inner-focused and outer-focused activities in proper proportion and relation to each other? (80)

It’s hard to be fully creative without structure and constraint. (84)

The difference between structures that support and those that constrict is simply their alignment with purpose. (85)

The value of a personal-management system is its ability to release resources for higher and better work, because of the trust its support provides to the psyche. But no system is truly effective if there is any inconsistency in that support. Real systems must be solid enough to hold up in the toughest reality – when we least feel like maintaining them. (92)

The better your systems, the more you don’t know you have them. You want to be working, doing, thinking, creating, and dealing with things – not focused on how you’re doing them. (95)

A great source of stress in personal and professional relationships is the mismatch of standards you aren’t aware of when you make the initial agreements. Unfortunately, you usually recognize your own expectations of appropriate behavior only after they’ve been violated. (107)

Make a clear distinction between collecting, processing, and organizing, and give yourself permission to collect anything without censure or analysis. The psychologists call this “distributed cognition.” (111)

Expansion and contraction. Creation and completion. Right brain, left brain. Yin and yang. Bring polarities into balance. (112)

Fundamentals: 1. Maintain relaxation and control amid overwhelm; 2. Define doable projects; 3. Decide actions; 4. Recalibrate priorities; 5. Be alone, in cooperation; 6. Renegotiate implicit and explicit agreements; 7. Express and consider any ideas; 8. Refocus rapidly. (120)

Don't let enthrallment with your form (organization) detract from your function (outcome). (124)

Install a thought process and a good system for clearing the psychic decks, while framing perspective at the appropriate horizons to make good decisions. It never ultimately answers the questions "What's the best thing for me to do right now?" (125)

Decision-making based upon 1. Context; 2. Type of work; 3. Level of work. (128)

You exist on many levels. If you're avoiding any of them, you may be short sheeting all of them. (129)

When you plan that your plans may be interrupted or disturbed, you gain steadiness. Complaining about interference creates a swampy backwater of unproductive energy. Why delve into anything that's not what you want? If I'm subliminally afraid of an experience or harbor judgements about it, it will hold me captive at some level. (133)

Be comfortable with creative discomfort. (138)

If you're in a hurry, your vision can become myopic. (139)

There's a subtle but critical difference between something that is long term and something in the category of "someday/maybe". "As soon as possible" turns into "never" unless next physical visible-action steps are determined. Whether it is a real project, long-term or not, it has to have a next action for you to be at peace with yourself. (143)

Have a consistent internal forward momentum. If you're not propelling yourself forward to some degree, you won't have any real reference points. (147)

It takes much more effort to move than to change direction. No one gets carsick while driving the car. A much deeper level of equilibrium is accessed when you actually take charge of a moving vessel. Become cause instead of effect. (149)

Angst arises when you let loose the reins and stop directing your own energy. Avoiding things that demand your attention is like trying to stop the boat from rocking. (150)

Missiles and rockets are off course most of the time they're in the air. They get where they're going because they continually course correct. (151)

Workflow Mastery: 1. Collect. 2. Process. 3. Organize. 4. Review. 5. Do.

Planning Model: 1. Purpose/Guiding Principles; 2. Mission/Vision/Goal/Successful Outcome; 3. Brainstorming; 4. Organizing; 5. Next Actions.