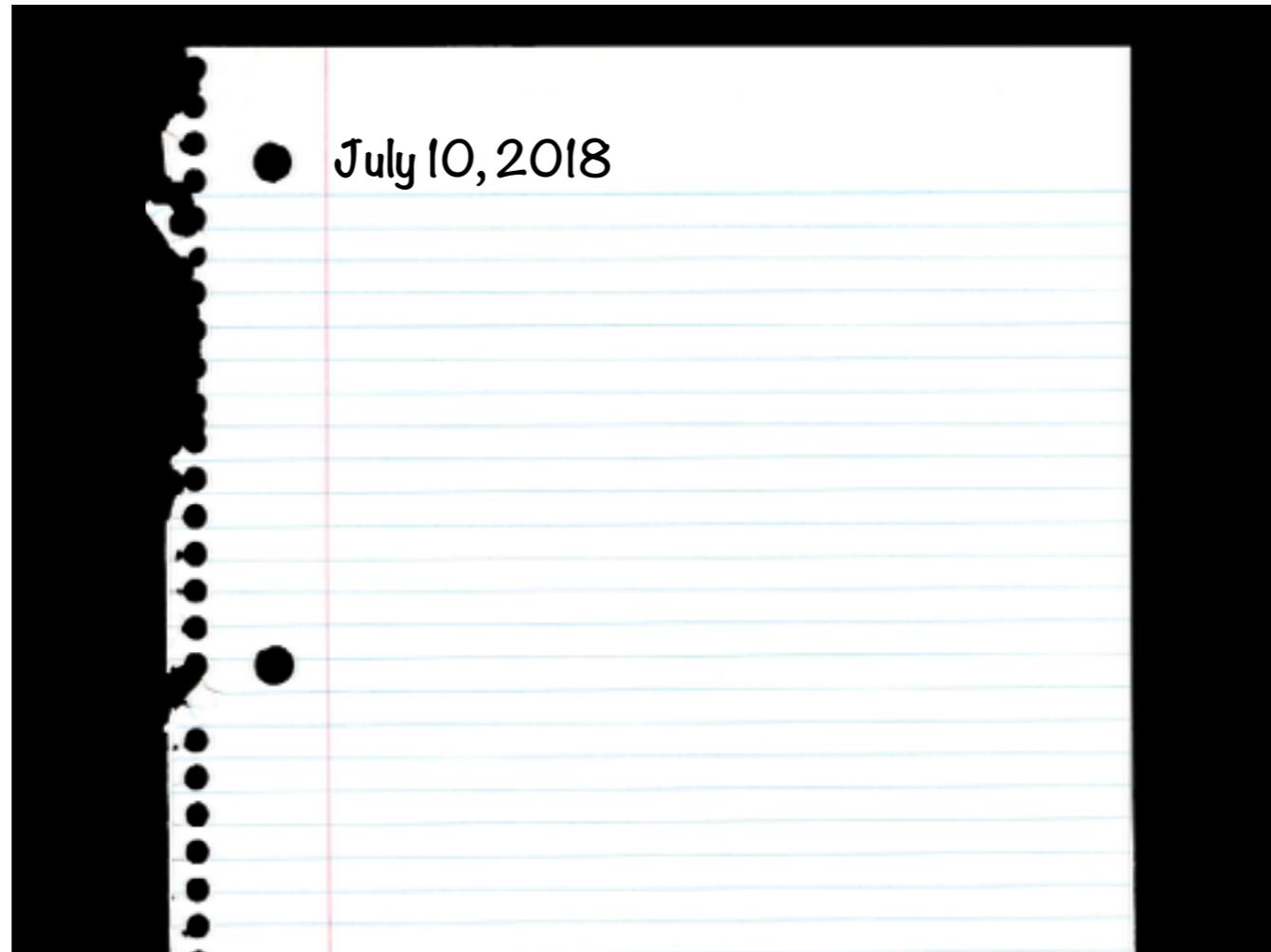




- William Smith, PSE with Jamf



- Before we begin, I'd like to ask each of you to take out a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil. At the top, put today's date.
- Just keep it to the side of your laptop.
- You're away from work and home. And your mind will naturally drift away from what we discuss today. That's probably because you're thinking of things you need to do.
- "I need to email my co-worker about something."
- "I need to FaceTime my kids before going to Legends."
- "I just remembered my dentist appointment is this Thursday and I need to call and reschedule it."
- When you think of something during this workshop that you don't want to forget, write it down on that piece of paper. Get it out of your head. We'll go over what to do with it later.



- 30 years ago, I had my very first employee evaluation. And it was a brand new experience for me.
- I was a full time student with a part time job making \$4.50/hr. back when the minimum wage was \$3.35.
- My co-workers thought I did good work. I never got in trouble for being late. I never called in sick.
- I thought I was the model employee.
- Carrie was my manager and I made a comment during my evaluation about wanting to learn more areas of the department so I could make more money. I thought my **enthusiasm** to learn something new would be enough impress her. She asked what I was doing about that and I responded with how busy I was doing my own job and that I couldn't find the time to learn.



- That's when Carrie said, "You don't find time; you make time."
- That left me dumbstruck. I didn't know what to say.



**'Ooooh,
fuuudge.'**

- This is what I would later learn as the classic manager generous pay-raise block!
- I didn't appreciate it at the time, but that was my first piece of advice telling me that just **doing** my job well was never going to be **enough** in my career.
- Making my manager happy would never be enough. She would always want more.
- Making my customers happy would never be enough. They'd always expect more.
- Spending time with my partner at home would never be enough because I was spending too much time at work.

After that first employee evaluation, I received a 23¢ per hour pay raise. It wasn't even a quarter! I felt insulted and for a long time, I blamed Carrie for not seeing my potential. This would be the first of several events in my career (often coming from my managers) telling me I need to focus on managing **me** and how I spend my time.



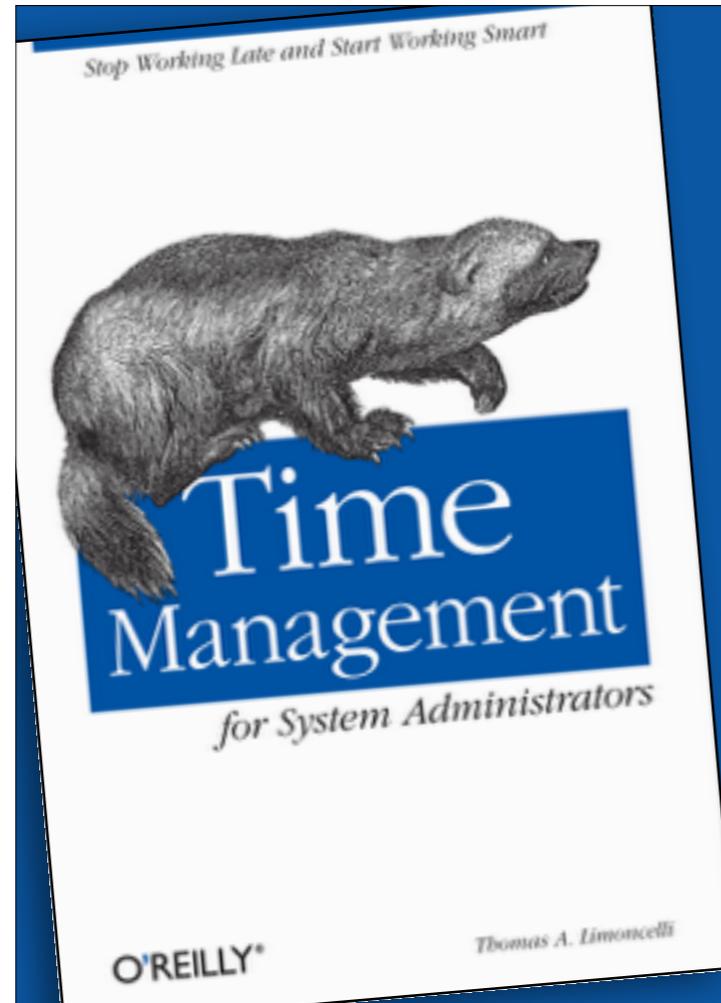
Over the years, I've learned time management isn't just about prioritizing a task list and sticking with it. It's actually made up of two parts:

The first part is gaining a comprehensive awareness of things that steal our time— "time thieves", if you will. The second part is making a concerted **effort** to prevent those **time thieves** from continuing to steal our time.



Over the years, I've learned time management isn't just about prioritizing a task list and sticking with it. It's actually made up of two parts:

The first part is gaining a comprehensive awareness of things that steal our time— "time thieves", if you will. The second part is making a concerted **effort** to prevent those **time thieves** from continuing to steal our time.



Tom Limoncelli

A lot of what we'll be discussing today is based on Tom Limoncelli's *Time Management for System Administrators* published by O'Reilly Media.

The first edition was published in January 2005 and was later published as an eBook, which you can download from Amazon for about \$10.

It's a **timeless** book (meaning its principals are just as valid today as when it was written). But it's a little dated too. 2005 was a few years before the world of smart phones and tablet computers. The book references things like PDAs and Palm Pilots, and Limoncelli feels he needs to turn you on to cutting edge technology like wikis and ticketing systems.

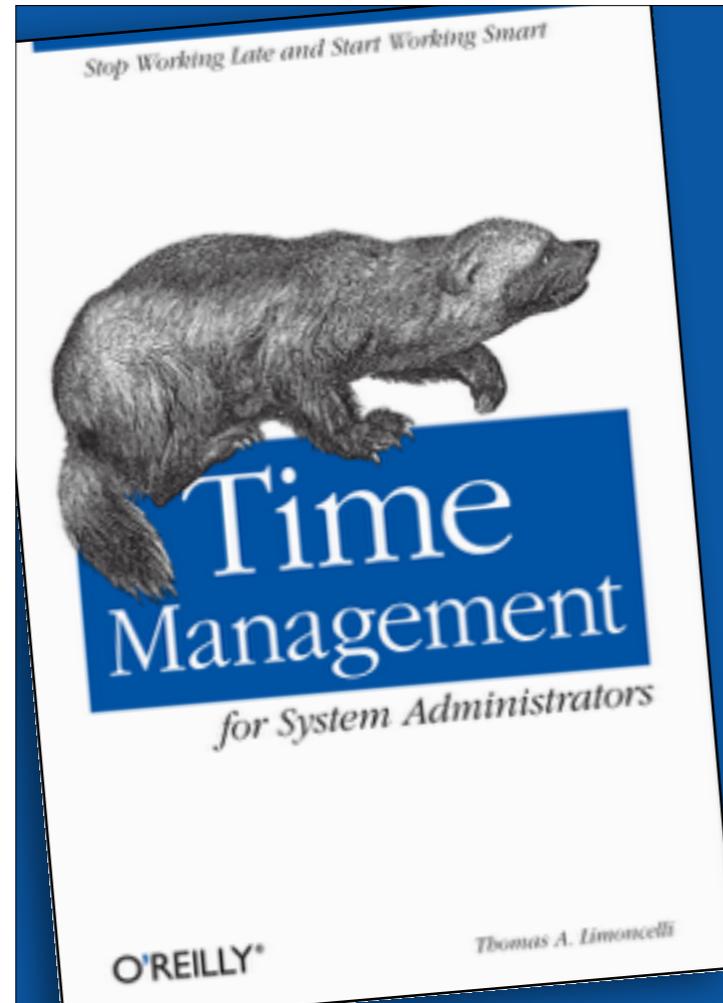
But the core principals of time management for administrators are still just as appropriate today as they were 13 years ago. In fact, he makes a special effort to call out that time management for an administrator is different from anyone else.

Can anyone speculate why that is?

Our roles are unique. We work across industries... across departments... and most of us across computer platforms.

Speaking of platforms, just keeping up with the rapid pace of change by Apple means we spend a lot of time learning and training and troubleshooting. For the most part, the practices that Accounting and Finance and Sales follow haven't changed in a long time. Their tools may change and evolve, but have they ever had a paradigm shift like moving away from Imaging to DEP?

We participate in projects both IT-related and business-related. Ultimately, we play a role across most every part of an organization. And in a time where "do more with



Tom Limoncelli

- Manage interruptions
- Eliminate timewasters
- Keep an effective calendar
- Develop routines
- Use your brain only
for what you're currently working on
- Automate processes for faster execution

Some of what we'll cover from the book includes:

- **Dealing with** walk-bys, phone calls and emergencies.
- **Understanding** where your time keeps going.
- **Making sure** you keep appointments and commitments.
- **Establishing** routines and habits that eventually become second nature.
- **Converting** your brain from storage to processing.
- And finally, **working harder** at being lazy. That's where the "**for Mac admins**" part of this workshop comes into play.

Organizers don't organize.

Lists don't write themselves.

Calendars don't attend meetings.



notebook



task list



calendar

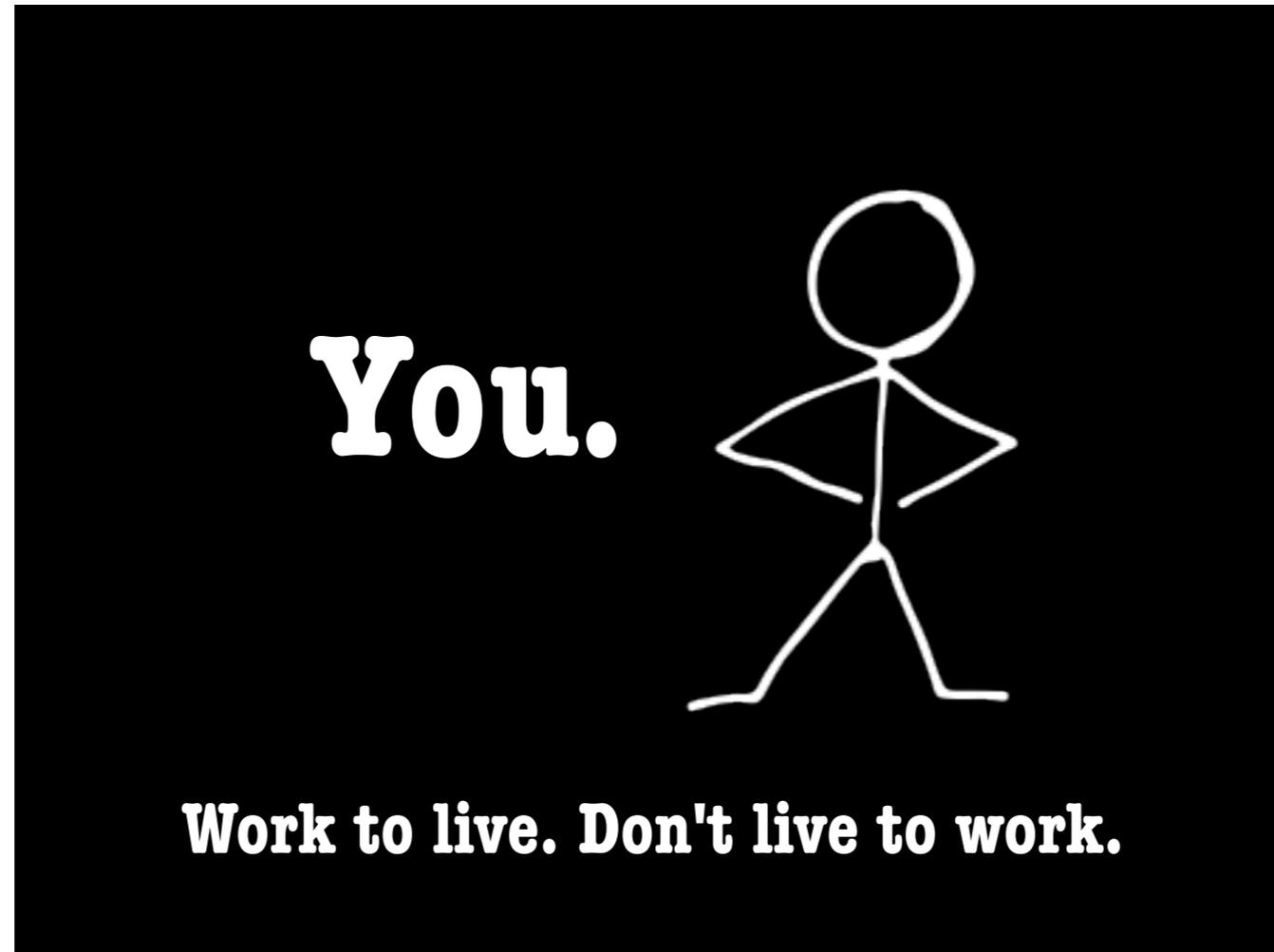
Later in this workshop, we're going to discuss Ben Franklin's system of time management, which in modern practice consists of an **organizer**, a **to-do list** and your **schedule**.

If you've ever heard of Franklin Covey, they make dozens of varieties of planners that combine all of these into one place. You don't need to get a Franklin Covey system, but you will need to build your own planner system. We'll talk about that later.

These three items will be your most important **tools** for managing your time. But...

- **Organizers** don't organize.
- **Lists** don't write themselves.
- **Calendars** don't attend meetings.

We're not here to discuss project management and we're not here to just talk about time management. We're really here to talk about **managing you**.



Goals for this session:

- Meet deadlines
- Keep commitments
- Reduce stress

We should all strive to **work to live** not **live to work**.

...

That's pretty sound advice, right?

Say that to yourself a few times and let it sink in.

"I work to live. I don't live to work."



Let's get started with one of the ideas from the book — [mantras](#).

And the best way to learn about mantras is to [play a game](#) of Jeopardy!



Let's get started with one of the ideas from the book — [mantras](#).

And the best way to learn about mantras is to **play a game** of Yeopardy!



The rules are simple...

Choose a category and a dollar amount. You'll be provided the answer. You must respond in the form of a question.

Our categories for this round are:

- **Mantras**
- **Mantras**
- **Mantras** and
- **Mantras**

Who'd like to go first?

JEOPARDY!

MANTRAS

MANTRAS

MANTRAS

MANTRAS

\$200

\$200

\$200

\$200

\$500

\$500

\$500

\$500

\$1000

\$1000

\$1000

\$1000

Fool me once, shame on you.
Fool me twice, shame on me.
A penny saved is a penny earned.
Do unto others
as you'd have them do unto you.
When you see something,
say something.
You don't find time;
you make time.
Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee.
Do or do not. There is no try.
Better late than never.
Fear leads to anger.
A stitch in time saves nine.
Anger leads to hate.
Winners never quit,
and quitters never win.
Look before you leap, and suffering.

I would consider each of these to be a mantra.

Think about them as they come across the screen.

How would you define "mantra"?

- A little piece of wisdom.
- Something you can easily remember.
- Poetics. Alliterative. May rhyme.
- Balanced.
- Something you can recite to yourself.
- Something that guides you to do the right thing.

**You don't find time;
you make time.**

This is what Carrie was doing for me. She was giving me a mantra — a small piece of wisdom for how to accomplish what I said I wanted to do. All I had to do was let it guide me.

When thinking about time management or organization, let mantras guide you. If you find yourself struggling to complete a task or needing motivation, find a mantra. Make one up if you need to.

Tom Limoncelli had a great example: He often questioned himself when he needed to do something.

- Should I change the backup tapes now?
- Should I write that documentation?
- Should I create a script to automate this task?
- Should I close that ticket now instead of later?
- Should I finish my case notes now instead of later?

**If I have to ask,
the answer is probably 'yes'.**

His mantra was, "If I have to ask, the answer is probably 'yes'."

How many of you have probably ever done that? Looked at something... maybe it's something you don't want to do... and said to yourself you probably need to get that done?

Recite and listen to your mantras.

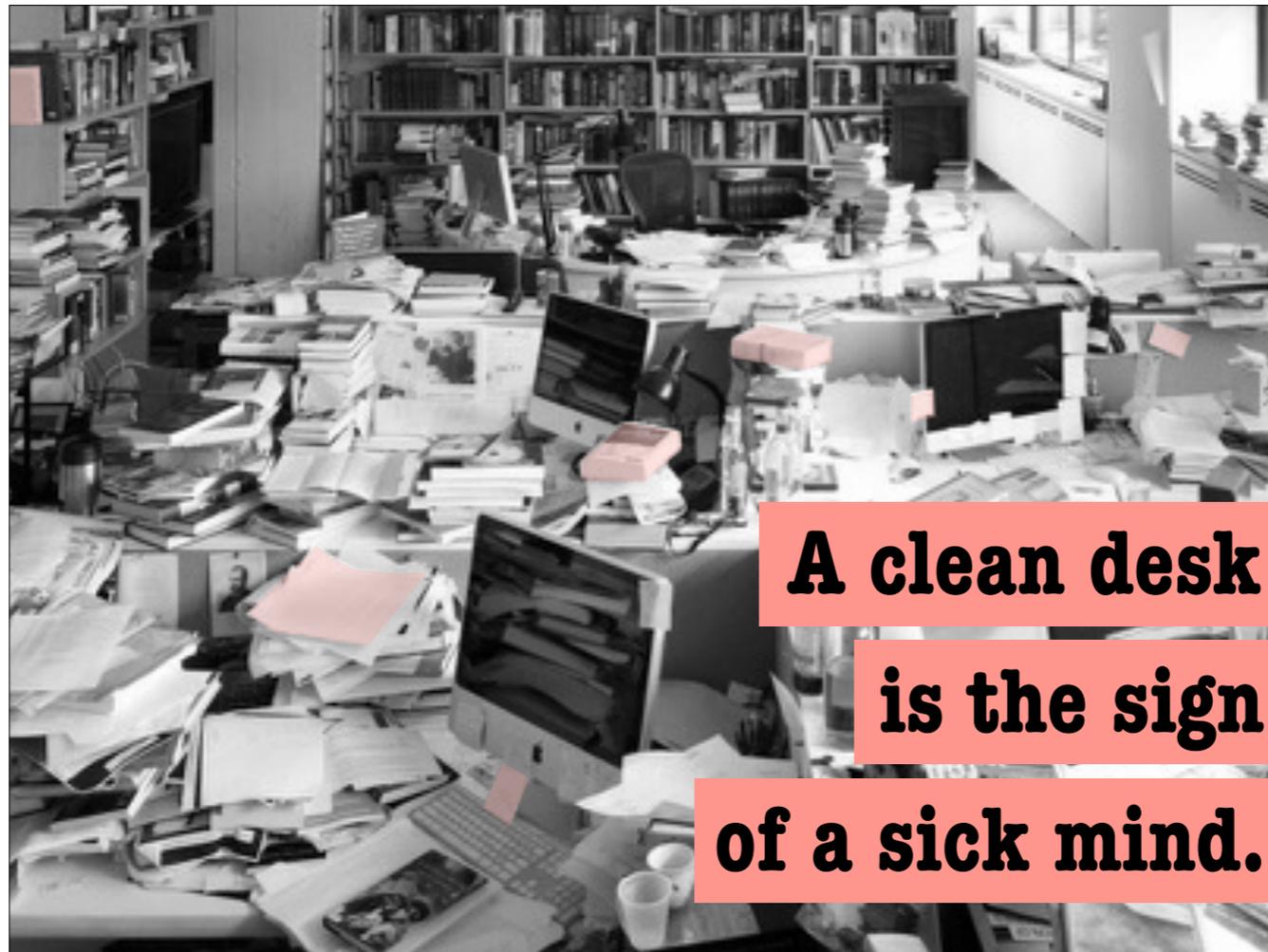
Now, let's move on to **distractions**.



Recognizing Distractions

How many of you would say you've lost time because of distractions? Name some.

- Phone
- Instant messaging
(Slack is the opposite of organizational memory)
- Email
- Users (passers-by, drop-bys, people watching)
Why do you think you're facing this way and not toward the doors?
- Yourself (thinking)
- Meetings
- Your own desk
- Your own computer screen (other open apps)
- Alarms and alerts, Apple Watch
- Daydreaming - Excited about something coming up.



Anyone recognize this mantra?

It's not a mantra! It's something people with messy desks say!

There is no wisdom in this saying. It doesn't motivate you to do anything except admit defeat! Don't admit defeat!

- As I look back at another moment in my career, the next the next piece of advice I'd receive from a manager would be about my desk.
- Before I was in IT, I was a graphic artist building grocery ads — the kind you'd see in your Sunday newspaper in full color, with big red prices, buy-one-get-one-free offers and coupons.
- I was a **creative** and creatives were naturally messy. You literally couldn't see the top of my desk.



My manager called me into his office one afternoon and said some wrong information was published in one of my ads. The customer claimed he faxed the changes before our deadline. He wanted an explanation.

I said I never saw the fax. But later, we found it buried on my desk under other papers. Our proofreader had put it there while I was out and I never noticed it for all the clutter.

At first, I said it's not my fault because the proofreader "just threw it on my desk without telling me."
But my manager wasn't buying that. He said, **"You control your desk. You control how you receive information."**

'You control your desk.

You control how you receive information.'



My manager called me into his office and said some wrong information was published in one of my ads. The customer claimed he faxed the changes before our deadline. He wanted an explanation.

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But my manager wasn't buying that. He said, **"You control your desk. You control how you receive information."**

'You control your desk.

You control how you receive information.'



And he was right. But I wouldn't really appreciate it until a few years later when I was in a different office (**and in IT now**) and still had a desk so cluttered you couldn't see the top.

The managers in our department had been going through a time management course called "Priority Management". It's similar to Franklin Covey courses if you've ever heard of those. My manager asked if I wanted to go to the class and I said, "Sure." In my mind this was a day away from work.

It was that class that opened my eyes to time management and what it really meant. It was about the concepts we're covering today.

The first thing we need to do in order to manage our time is remove distraction.

The first actions we should take are to remove clutter.

The first place we clean should be our desk tops.



I'm not talking about taking this. This is just organized clutter. There's still distraction everywhere.

If you look up, you're guaranteed something's going to catch your eye and take your mind off your work.

It might be this note trying to remind you to do something.



I'm not talking about taking this. This is just organized clutter. There's still distraction everywhere.

If you look up, you're guaranteed something's going to catch your eye and take your mind off your work.

It might be this note trying to remind you to do something.



It might be this calendar reminding you about your family vacation in a couple of weeks.



Are these here because I need to write thank you notes or because I want to try some new recipe in my Instant Pot? That reminds me I need to go to the store and buy the ingredients.



Look at all those magazines I've collected. I need to find time to read those. Then I'll throw'em away.

What time is it? That clock's probably telling you time is slipping away from what you should be doing.



Wait, is this my grocery list?



Or is this it?



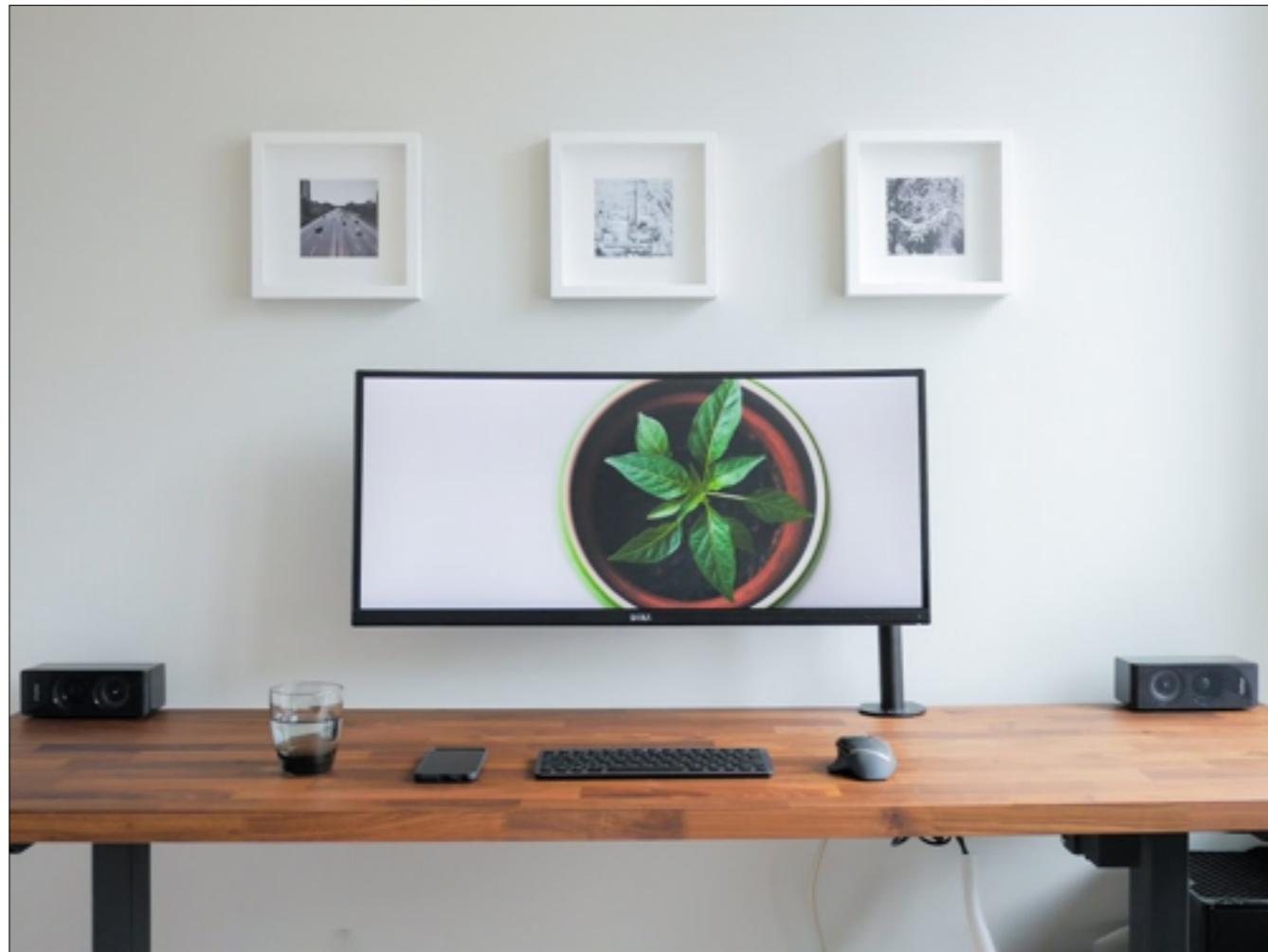
That's not how organization works! **That's not how any of this works!**



Organized clutter != distraction-free

Organized clutter doesn't mean **distraction-free**. I'm talking **more like this**.

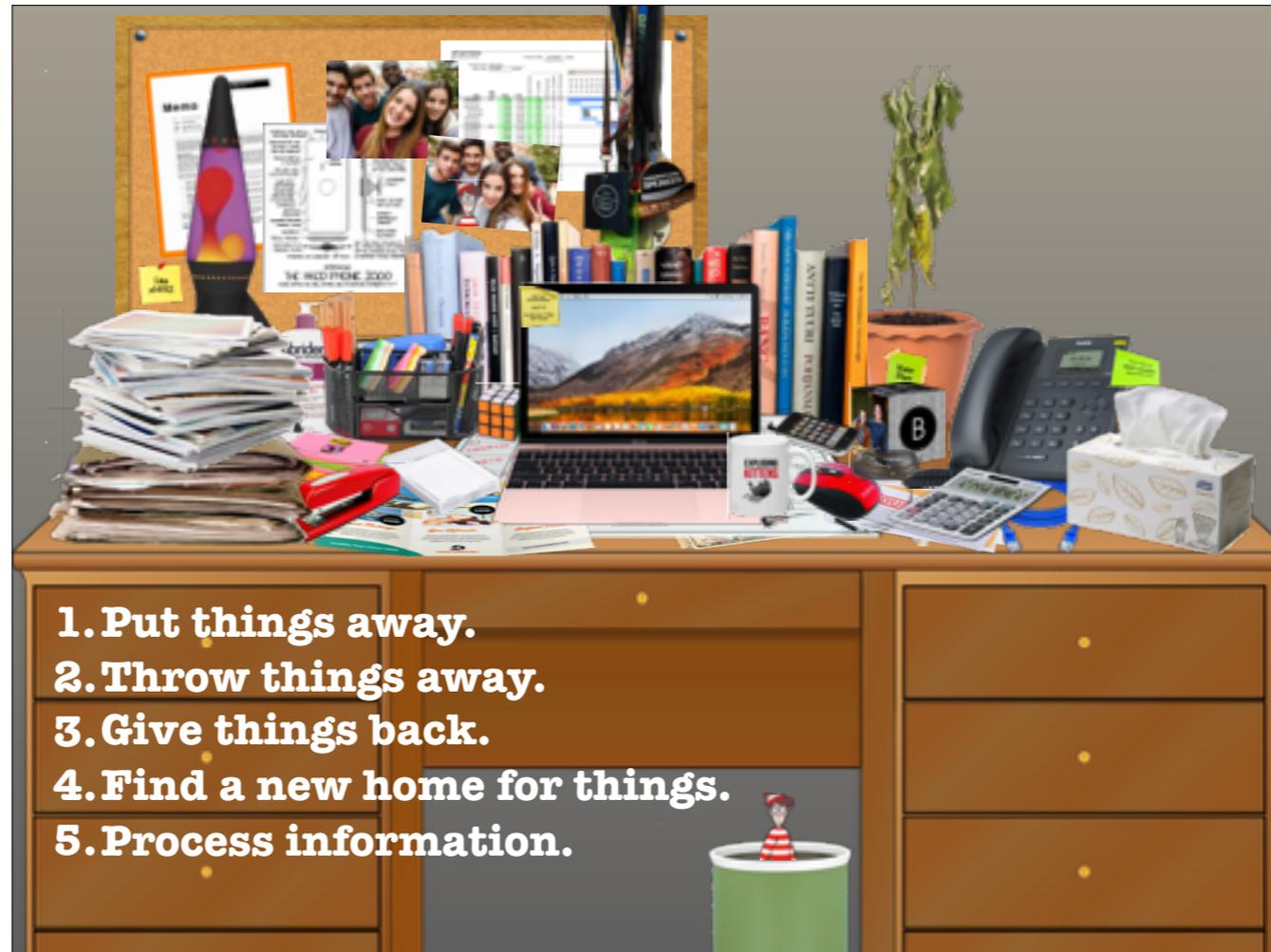
Clean desk porn on the Internet is some of the cleanest porn you'll ever find... and it's safe for work.



Organized clutter doesn't mean **distraction-free**. I'm talking **more like this**.

Clean desk porn on the Internet is some of the cleanest porn you'll ever find... and it's safe for work.

Let's try an exercise...



Where's Waldo?

It's pretty easy to spot him in the waste basket. [Give me some reasons for why you think that is?](#)

- There's no clutter around him.
- There's nothing to distract you.
- Your focus is almost immediately drawn toward him.
- You're repulsed by the chaos on the desk.

When you have a cluttered desk and you want to get to a distraction-free desk, where do you even start? You're going to do one of five things:

1. **Put things away.**
2. **Throw things away.**
3. **Give things back.**
4. **Find a new home for things.**
5. **Process information.**

Let's start with our red swing line stapler.



Do we really staple all the time? And by "all the time" I mean so frequently that we need the stapler at our disposal at a moment's notice on top of our desk?

It can be just as convenient but off our desk if we designate one of the drawers in our desk for office supplies. **We'll put it away.**



When you were sneezing your brains out a few weeks ago because of all the pollen in the air, maybe it made sense to keep tissues on your desk. But unless you're constantly blowing your nose, let's designate another drawer for personal items and **keep the tissues there.**



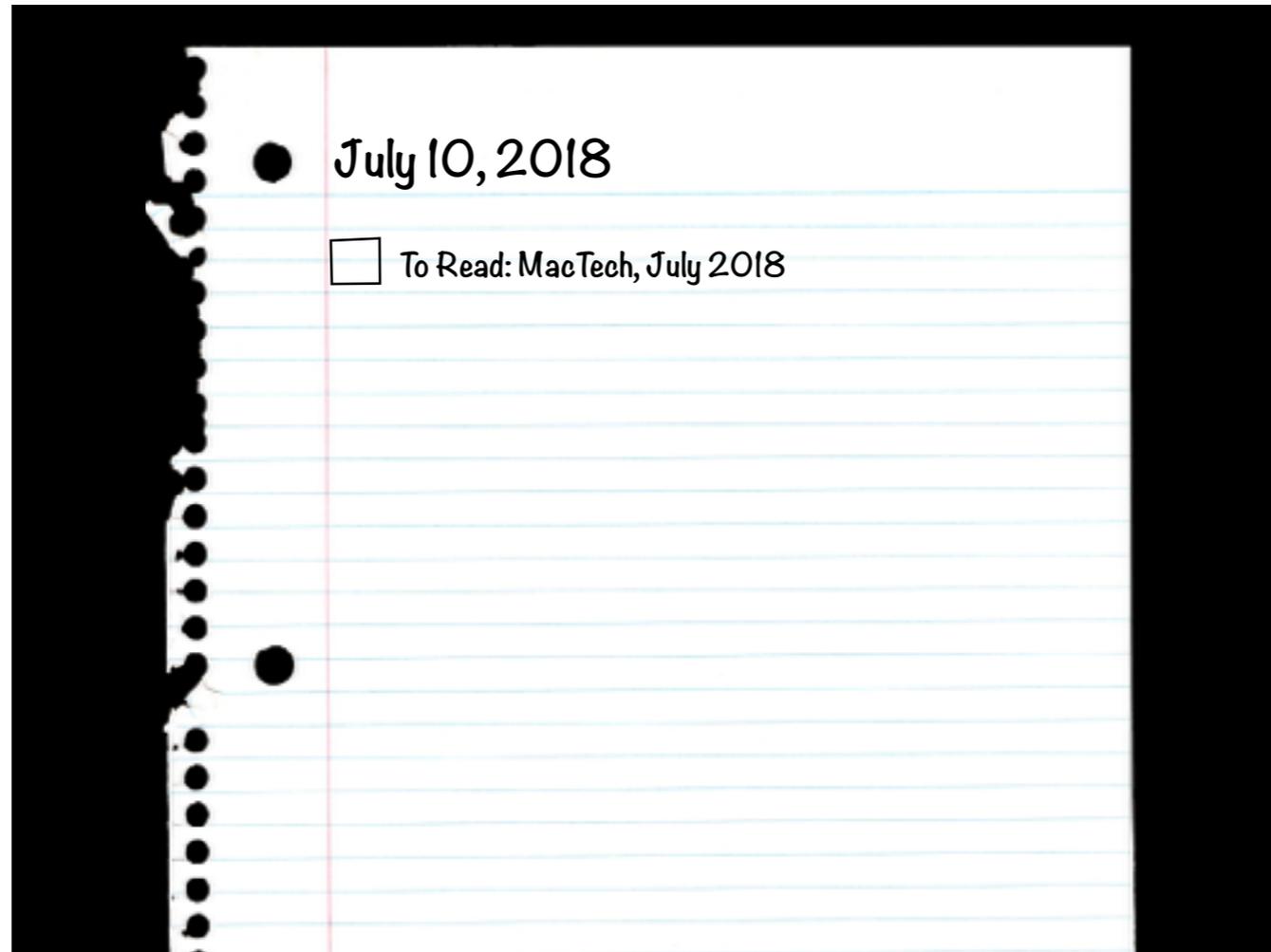
What about all those magazines you're planning to read? Have you read any yet? Are you really going to?

Does anyone feel a little anxious when throwing away a magazine you haven't read yet? It's natural. But that's still no excuse for keeping something without making any plans for doing something with it.

Here's a compromise:

Trash every magazine more than a month old. The information is already stale.

Designate one of your desk drawers for "pending items" and place your newer magazines in a folder called "To Read".



And finally, this is where that sheet of paper and pencil that I asked you to get out earlier comes in handy.

I want you to **draw a small box** to the left of one line and then **put the name of the folder you just created**. Follow that with the edition of the magazine you're putting in your **To Read** folder.

What you're doing is **processing** this item. You're indicating this is something you need to do and where you'll find the resources to do it.

We're likely going to process more items as we clean off our desk.

Once we've reached the end of the day, we'll process this entire list of tasks.



Alright, what's next?

How about this desk calculator?



Anyone have an opinion about that?

We could either give it back or recycle it. Either way, we have a calculator on our computer and another one on our phone. Both are far more sophisticated than this one.



Here's a notepad.

It's office supplies, so it makes sense to **go into our drawer** for office supplies. But you might also consider the last time you had to write a note to someone instead of emailing or instant message.



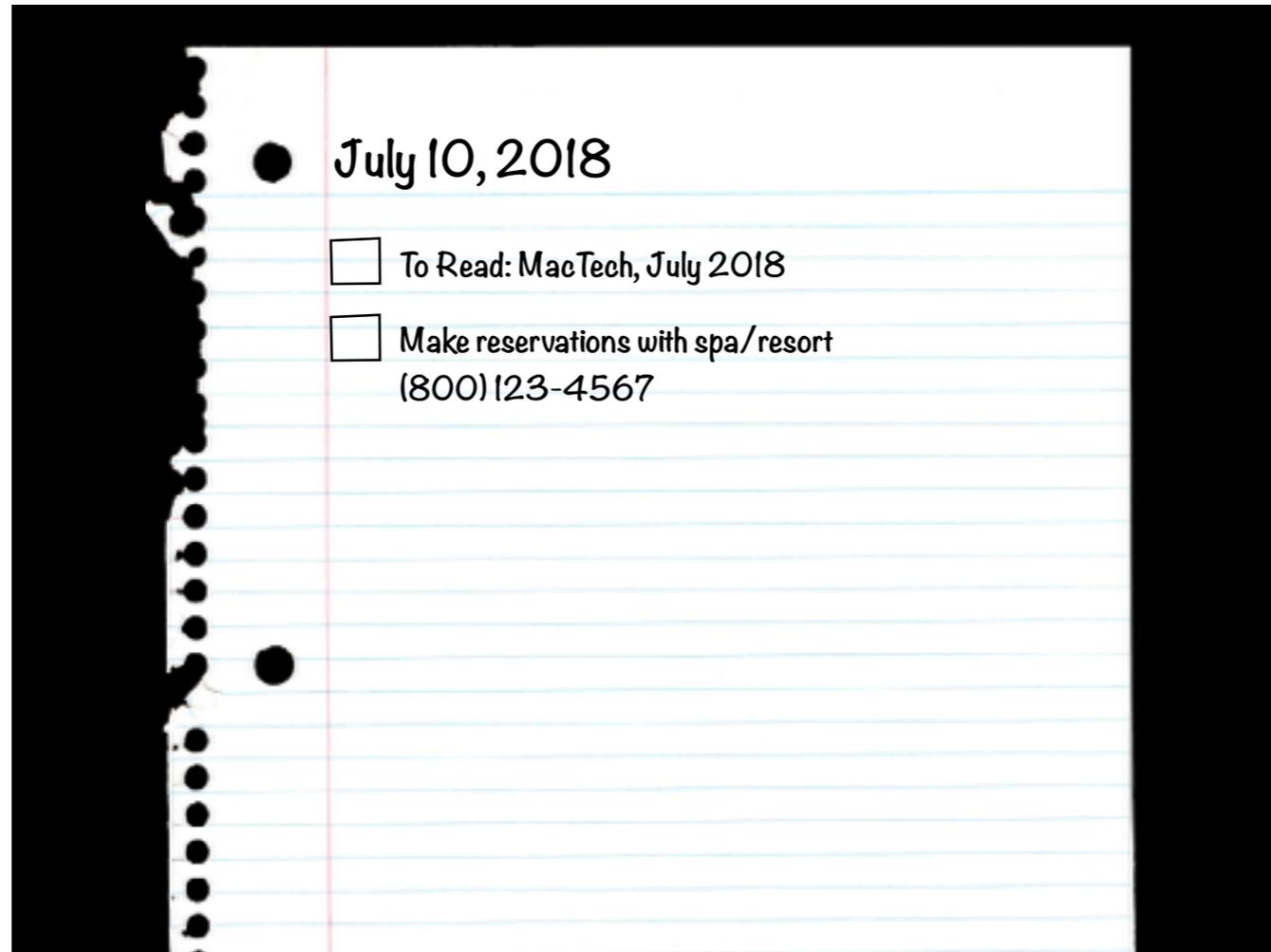
Our coffee mug?

If it's empty, go rinse it out and put it into **your personal drawer**.



OK, what's this?

Looks like we're planning a spa/vacation. And we have been for a few months. That's how long the brochure's been here. It's time to finally do something about it.



On our sheet of paper, we **draw a small box** on the left and then **write down what we need to** do to make the reservation.



We don't need the brochure anymore. Get rid of it.



Here we have a perfectly good Ethernet cable. Looks like we got it out but never used it.

Go put it back in the tech closet.



And while you're at it, you got these five pads of Post-it notes the last time you were in the office supply closet. **Why five pads!?**

Give'em back. One pad will probably last you six months. When you run out, walk those 25 steps to the office supply closet and get another pad.



And for crying out loud! Do you really need this desk caddy full of more sticky notes, another stapler, a dozen pencils, half a dozen markers and who knows what else!?

Can you write with more than one hand at a time? Do you as an administrator **actually write** that much? Keep a pen. Maybe keep a marker. Put those in your office supplies drawer and **put the rest back in the closet.**

Give'em back. One pad will probably last you six months. When you run out, walk those 25 steps to the office supply closet and get another pad.



Where do folders go?

Put'em back.

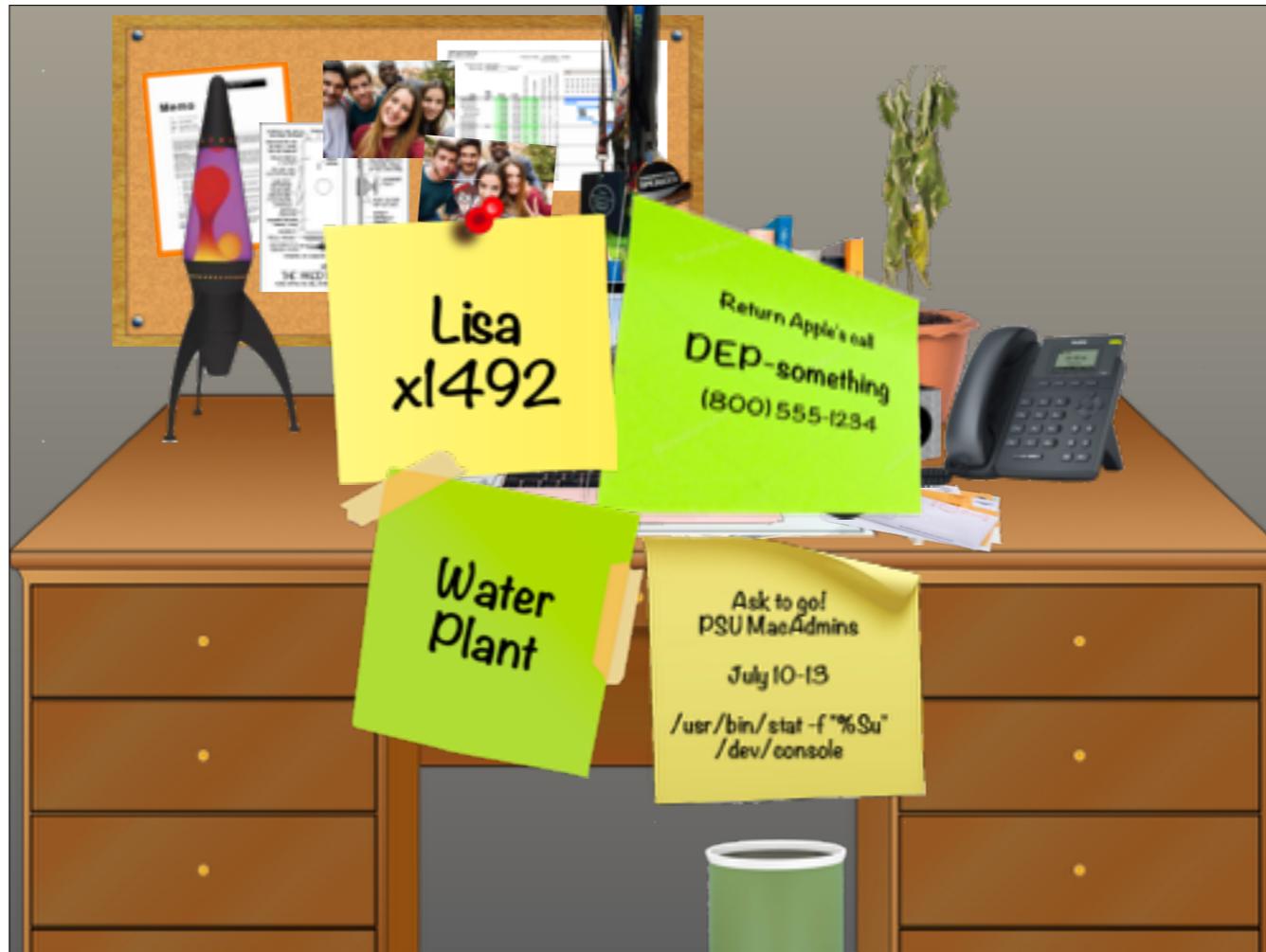


If you're not listening to your music on your phone,

Put'em in your personal drawer.



Same goes for this too. It's **important to moisturize**, but don't want to over do it.

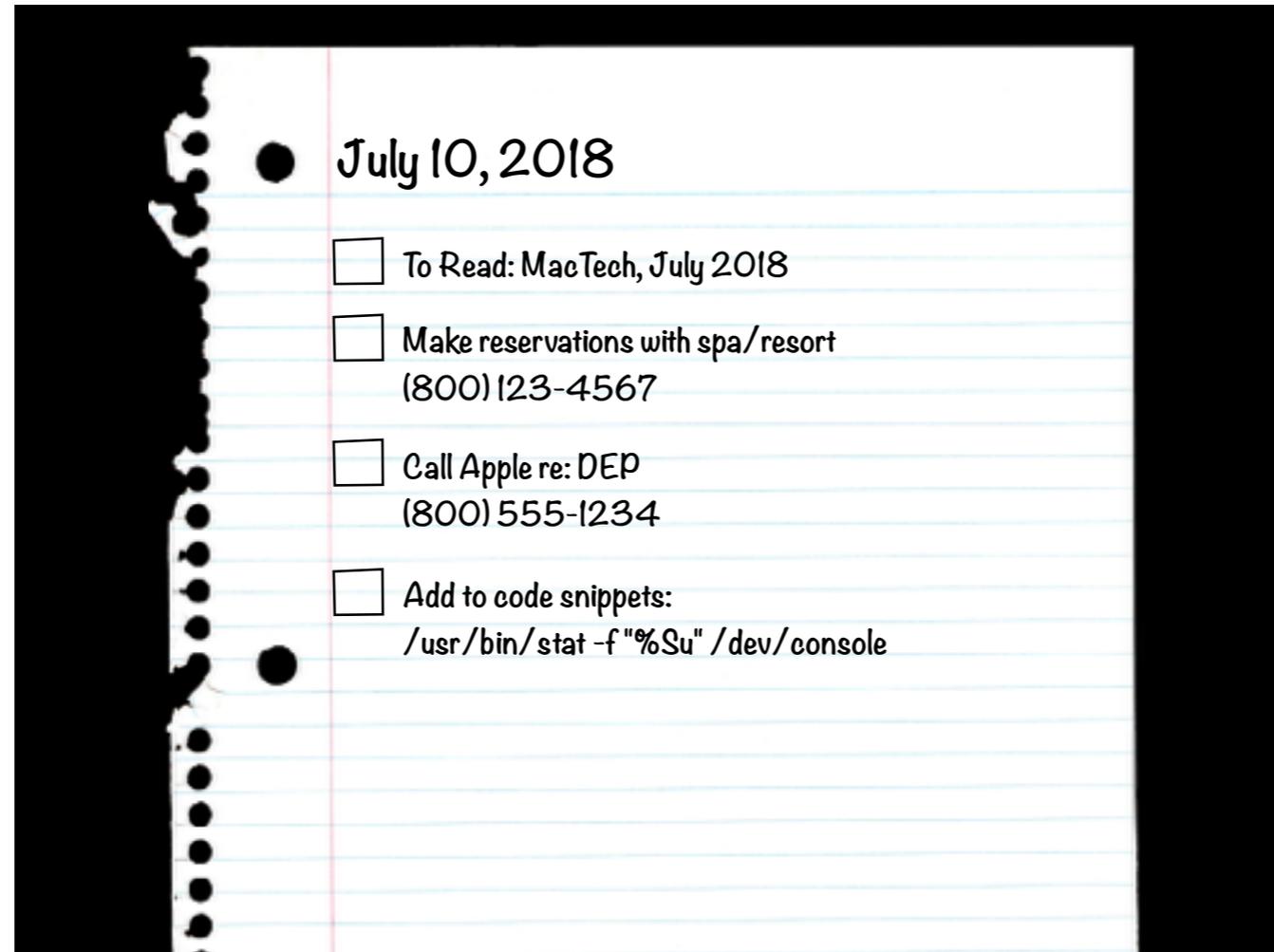


We have a few sticky notes hanging around. What are these about?

Which ones are important and which ones aren't so important?

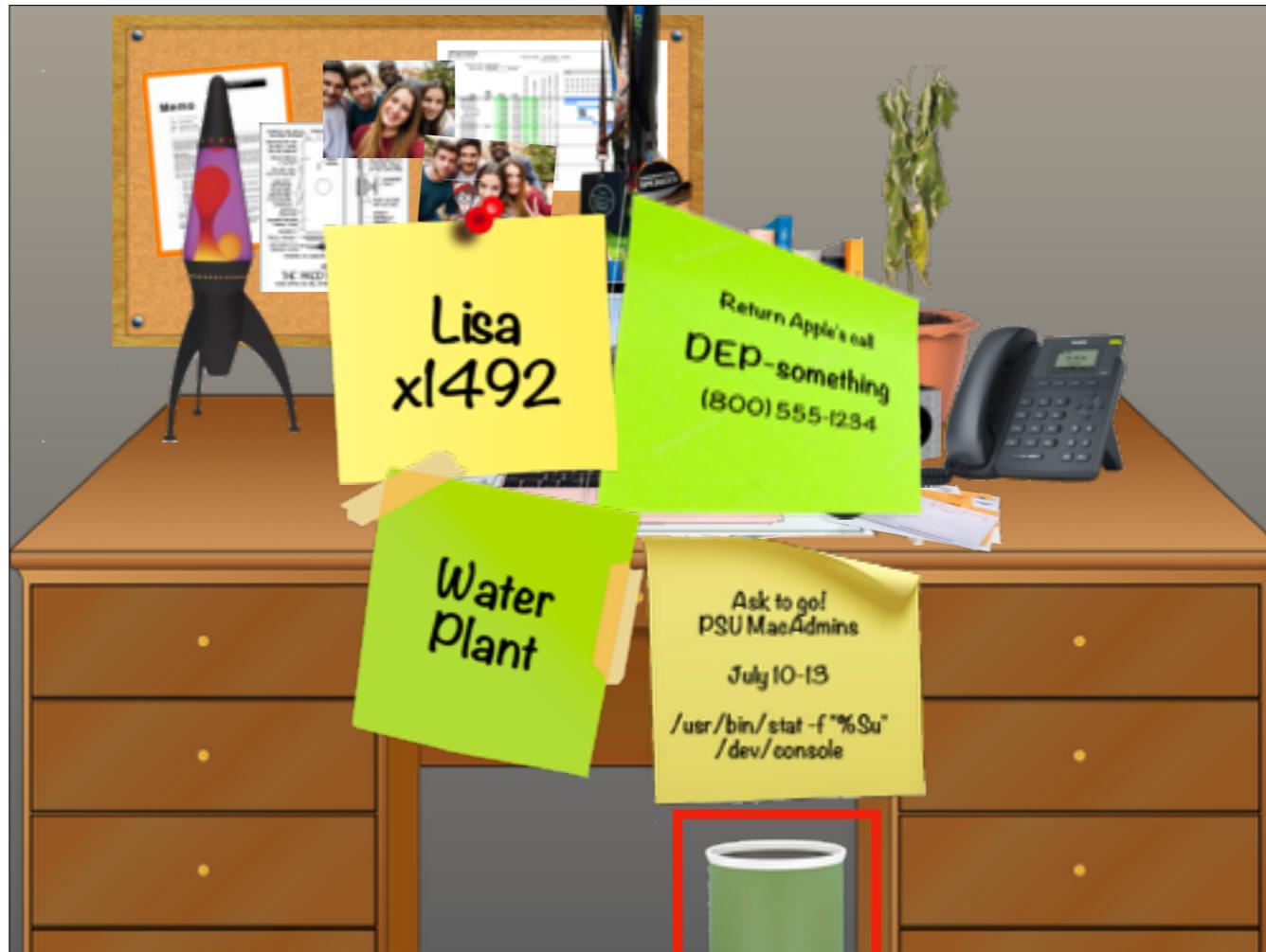
- The first one looks like Lisa's phone extension. If we call her often enough, we'll remember it. If we don't call her that often, we can look her up in the company address book.
- The next one below it is a reminder to water the plant. I think it's too late.
- The next two, though, seem to have some important information. We need to call Apple about some DEP thing. And while it's too late to ask to come this conference, looks like there's a code snippet we may want to keep.

It's **important to moisturize**, but don't want to over do it.



We'll **write down** we need to call Apple.

And we'll **write down** that code snippet and put it with our list of code snippets later.



Now that we've added the important information to our notes, **we don't need** these sticky notes any more.



Time of death: **a few weeks ago.**



We have a charger for our mouse. One charge lasts several days and we're usually charging over night.

Let's **keep this in the** office supplies drawer.



Pictures of family and friends are nice to have at the office, but they can definitely be a distraction if you're planning a party or getaway.

Anyone notice Waldo?

Consider putting these **somewhere behind** you or on a high shelf where you have to purposely turn around or look up to see them. These are more for your co-workers to see anyway.



Uh oh! What are these? How long have they been there?

What should we do with them?

● July 10, 2018

To Read: MacTech, July 2018

Make reservations with spa/resort
(800) 123-4567

Call Apple re: DEP
(800) 555-1234

Add to code snippets:
`/usr/bin/stat -f "%Su" /dev/console`

Pending: Pay bills!

I'm **writing down** where I'm putting the bills — in the Pending folder — and that I need to pay them.



And then **into my drawer** for pending items.



My Rubik's Cube has been solved for the past three years.

I think I'll **give it away**.



A ruler. I actually use this to open locked drawers for co-workers.

It **goes into** the office supplies drawer.



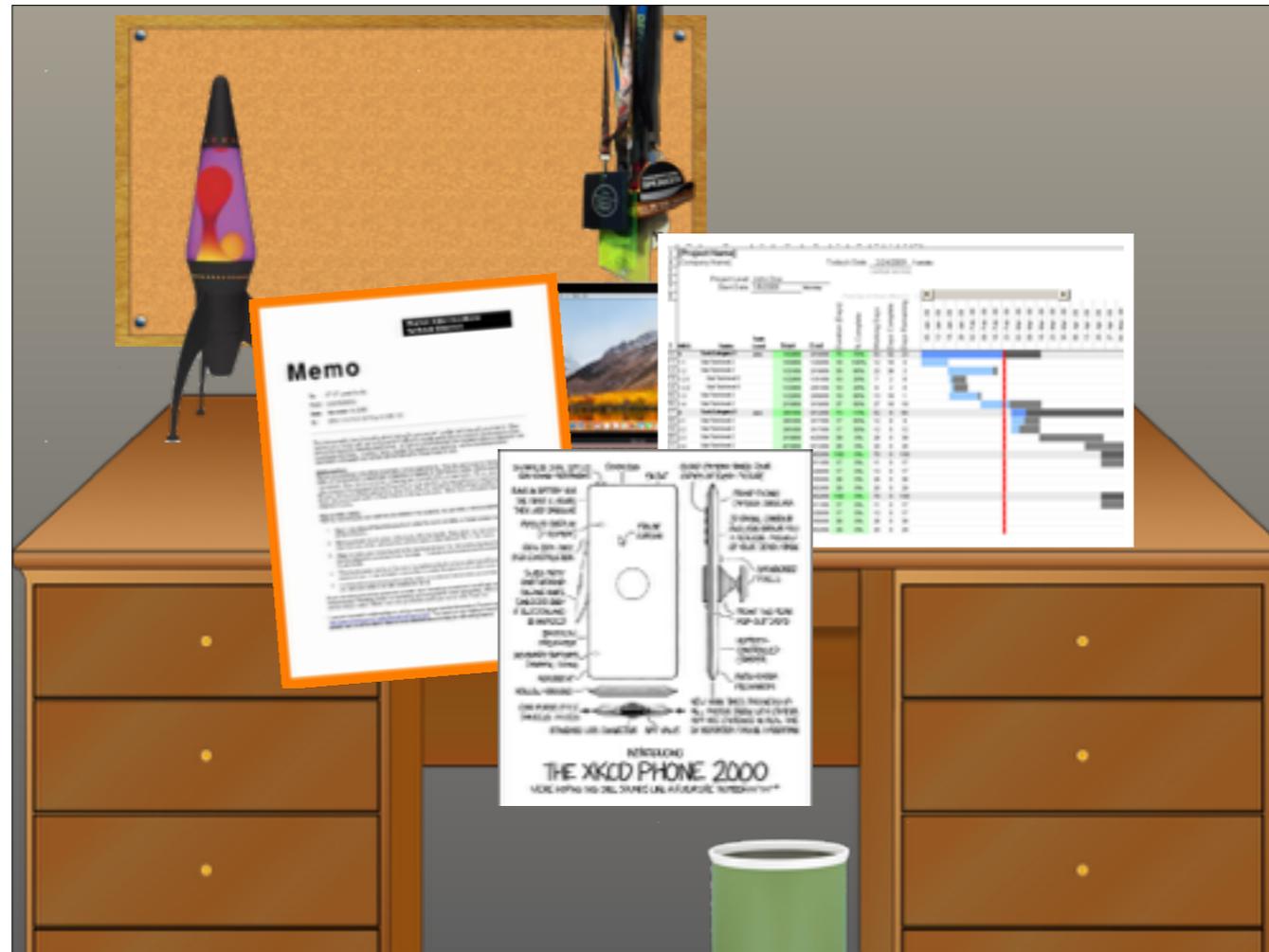
A desk calendar! From last year!

I'm going to advocate later that you keep all your appointments and meetings listed in a single calendar somewhere else. **Desk calendars are so last decade.**



And look what happens when we clean up!

This will come in handy **for those over due bills!**

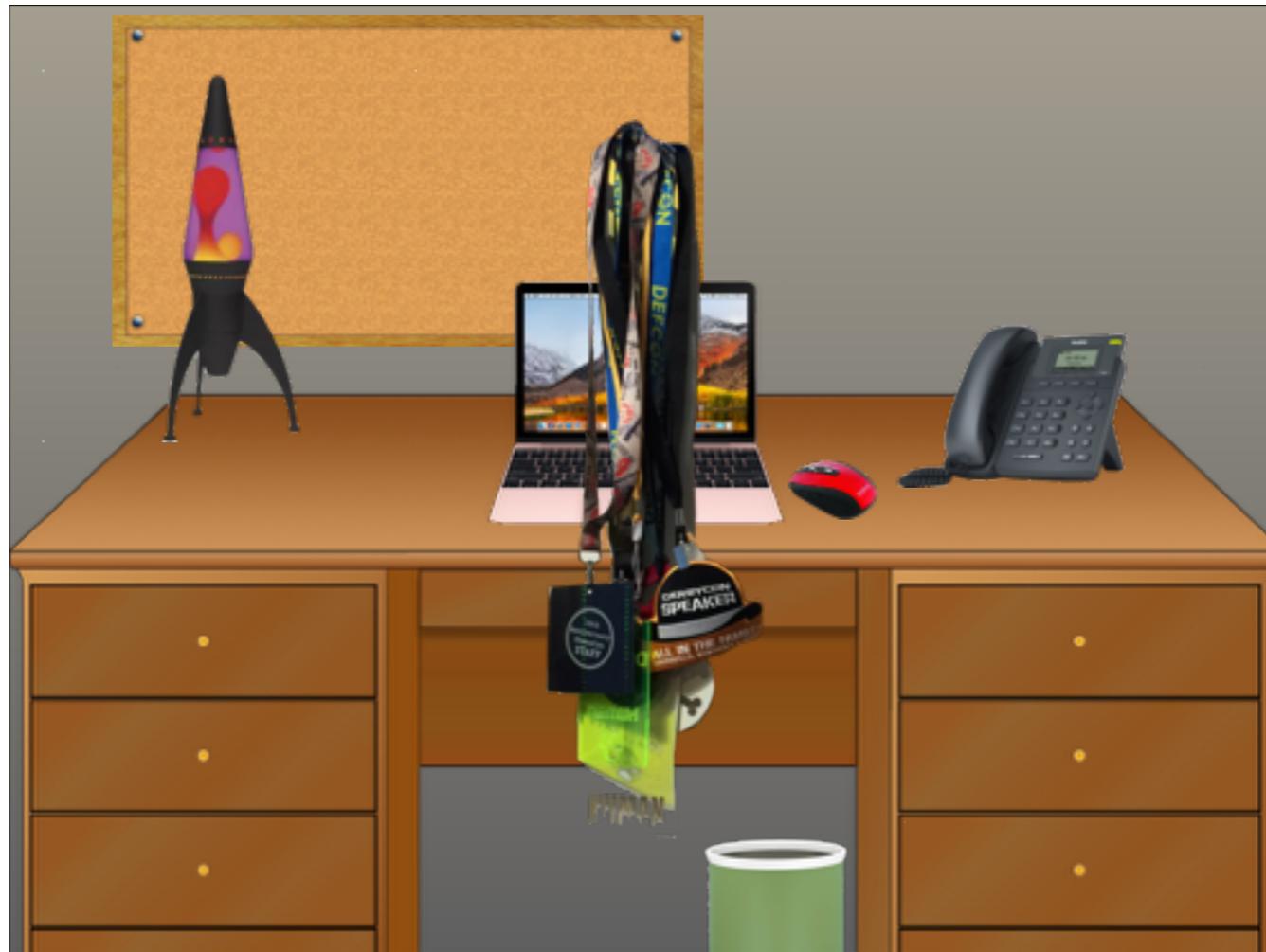


Did you get that memo about putting the new covers on your TPS reports? Who still prints memos!?

Is that XKCD comic still as funny today as it as three months ago when you put it up?

Didn't that project finish up **last year**?

Paper documents are short-lived in use but often become long-lived on our bulletin boards. Avoid even putting them up unless you're referencing them at the moment. Keep your project files together and then keep them off your desk unless you're **working on them at the moment**.



Conference lanyards and badges.

You think they're cool. **No one else cares.**

So, what's left?

You have space for your computer. Space for any paperwork you may need to have in front of you. Your phone is in reach, but if your office facilities group can **mount your phone on the wall** to get it off your desk, that leaves you even more room.



And while I can't remove the bulletin board, I can cover it with something interesting yet non-distracting. It goes well with my rocket-ship lava lamp, which is soothing to watch and helps relieve stress.

I might even try bringing in another plant and seeing if I can avoid killing it.

Avoid trying to fill the void. There's space all around your work area. You don't need to fill it. Don't let it become a vacuum trying to suck that red Swing Line stapler permanently onto your desktop. Instead, let it draw you in.

Let it calm you. Let it relax you. This is a stress-free zone because it's a distraction-free work area.



When you see this, can you feel your stress level goes up?

And then when we go from this...



To this... Can you feel some of that stress going away? When I went through this exercise 20 years ago, I was amazed at how much my stress level went down.

Now, where's Waldo?

mise en place

As we go forward, we're going to borrow from a French cooking term known as **mise en place**.

Who can tell me what that means?

mise en place

**/MEEZ ahn plahs/ • French • noun
‘putting in place’ or ‘everything in its place’**



Mise en place refers to the setup required of having all your ingredients prepared and ready before you start cooking: Your vegetables are peeled, your spices measured, your pans and cooking utensils are ready and at-hand.

It roughly translates as "to put in place" or "everything in its place".

Mise en place is why you're decluttering your desk top.



Having the room to have everything in place means you can watch a YouTube video on your computer to teach you how to change a component in another computer.



It means you can have a book open to the side of your computer while you learn a new application or scripting language.



And it means you can focus on paying your bills without losing them under other paperwork...

Or maybe even notice when someone puts a fax with grocery ad corrections on your desk.

Mise en place.

And when your tools aren't in use, they're put away.

What mantra does that sounds like?

A place for everything and everything in its place.

Have any of you ever lost your keys?

What's the result of losing your keys? Anyone?

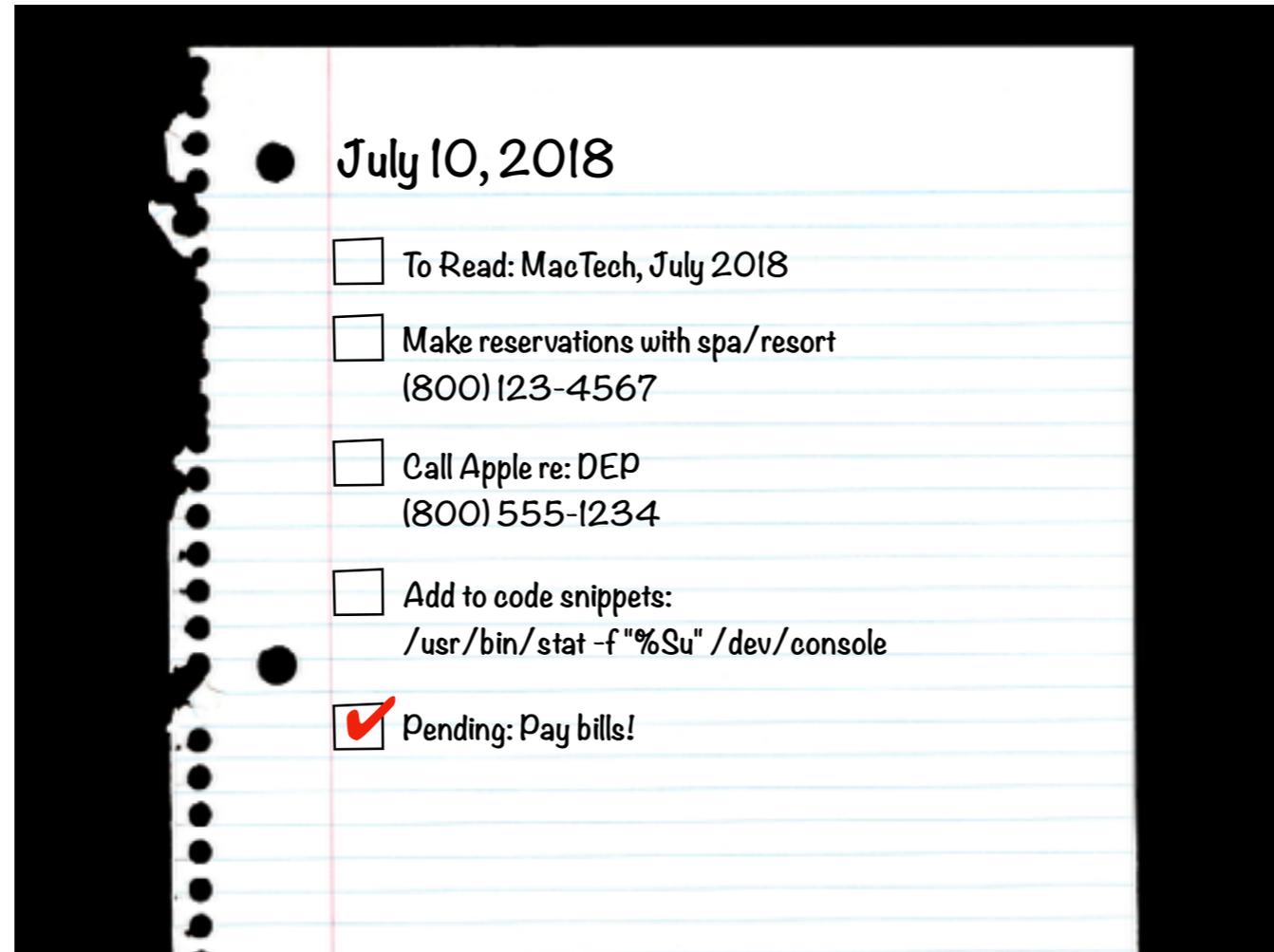
- You're late for work
- Stress level goes up
- Stress level starts high for the day

My friends Kirsten and Lori had this problem and went shopping for **a little dish or tray** for their home with the plan to use it as a place to put **their** keys when **they** get home.

They could've just as easily pulled something out of one of their cabinets and set it on a counter somewhere and said, "Lo, forever more I shall place my keys in this holy when I come home."

But instead they went shopping for a little dish or tray. **Why do you think that is?**

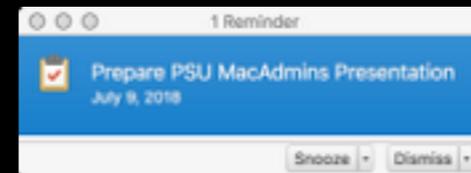
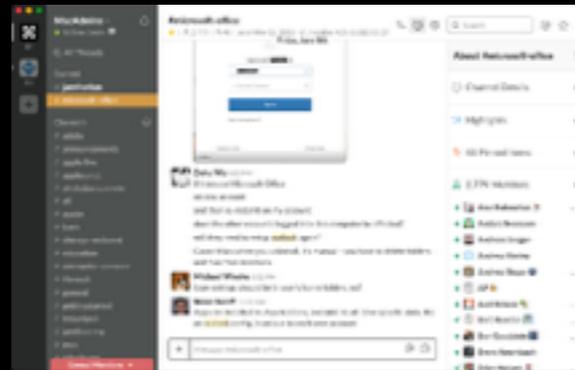
- Psychology
- It becomes more important the more it affects you.
- It was such a problem they **consciously** or **unconsciously** decided to spend as much time solving this problem as it was costing them.
- When you spend time solving a problem, your solution has more time to solidify. If you've ever written a script, you understand what I'm talking about.



And don't forget, we have **in one place now** a list of what we need to be working on. If you've ever sat at your desk and wondered, "**OK, what next?**", this is where you go.

And since we finally just paid those bills, **here's one thing off our list.**

Distractions



We've spent a lot of time just talking about how the clutter on your desk causes distraction.

What else distracts us?

- Our phones
- Co-workers
- Applications we've set to distract us like reminders
- Voicemail, email and messages
- Chat (I'm addicted to MacAdmins Slack, but I've learned I need to quit it when visiting with customers.)

Can anyone name some more?

A little later, we'll discuss more about managing these types of distractions. For now, it's important to be able to identify these and other... **time burglars**.



Less is more.

If I had to sum up what removing distraction means to time management, it would be this: "less is more".

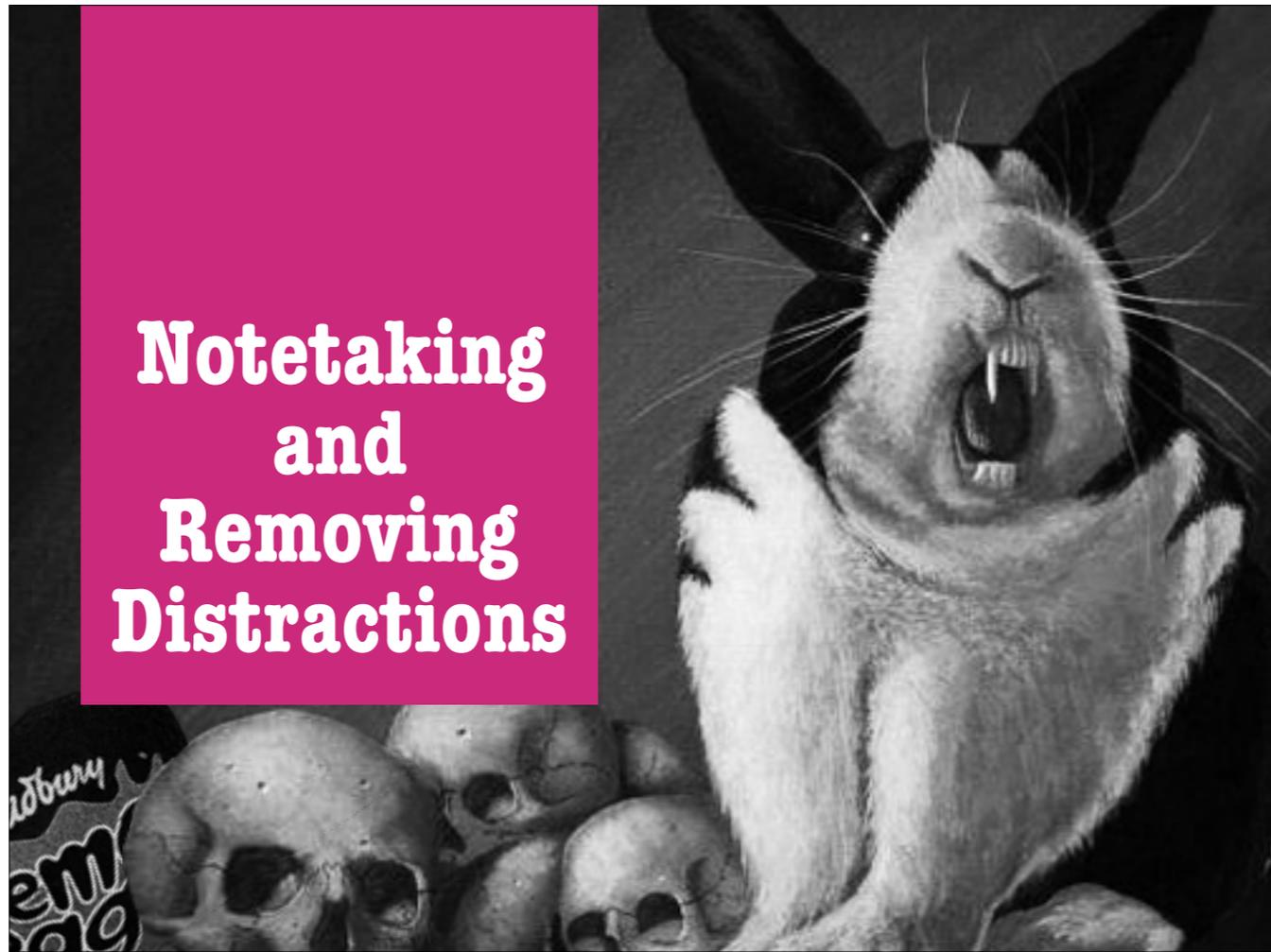
Less clutter leads to more focus.

Less distraction leads to more attention.

And less chaos leads to, well... less stress and anxiety.

This is all part of our quest to develop that comprehensive awareness of things that steal our time—those "**time burglars**".

Notetaking and Removing Distractions



We've talked about clearing your desk to remove distractions. Now, we need to talk about removing clutter from your brain.

In early 2001, I took a job as a Mac System Administrator for a company called Paper Magic Group. Paper Magic was a home decor company that made and sold seasonal decorations to stores like Target and Wal-Mart. I worked for the Minneapolis branch, which was responsible for Halloween and Easter.

Everything... all year long... all around me... was a mix of Halloween costumes, masks, makeup, witches hats, plastic tombstones and skulls with light-up eyes along with green plastic grass, Easter baskets, pastel fillable eggs, egg dye kits and bunny rabbits. It was all tossed together around the office like it was perfectly normal that you'd see this mix of stuff everyday.

Sam was our finance person. And she had a visitor from our home office in Scranton fly out to train her on a new piece of software. They sat side-by-side in front of the computer at Sam's desk and the training lasted about a couple of hours.

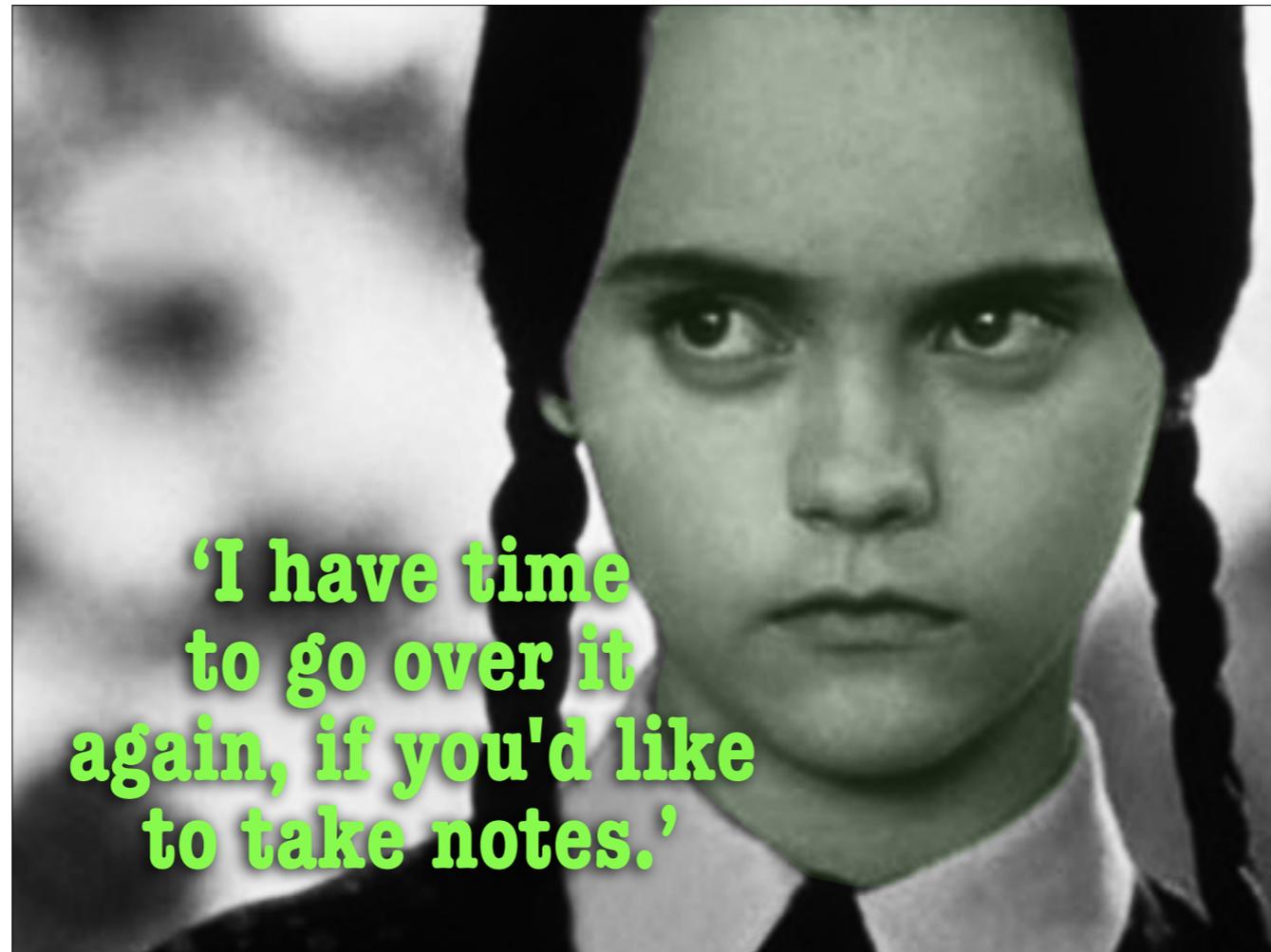


At the end of that couple of hours, Sam said something like, "That was a lot of stuff to cover. Are you going to send me written documentation on all that?"

The lady teaching Sam the new software **said, "I have time to go over it again,** if you'd like to take notes."

That was when Sam learned it's not the trainer's responsibility to teach. It's her responsibility to learn.

Does everyone remember back in school when someone would ask, "Is that going to be on the test?". At work, **everything** is on the test and the test is **your job**. You're not going to be told something if it doesn't matter.

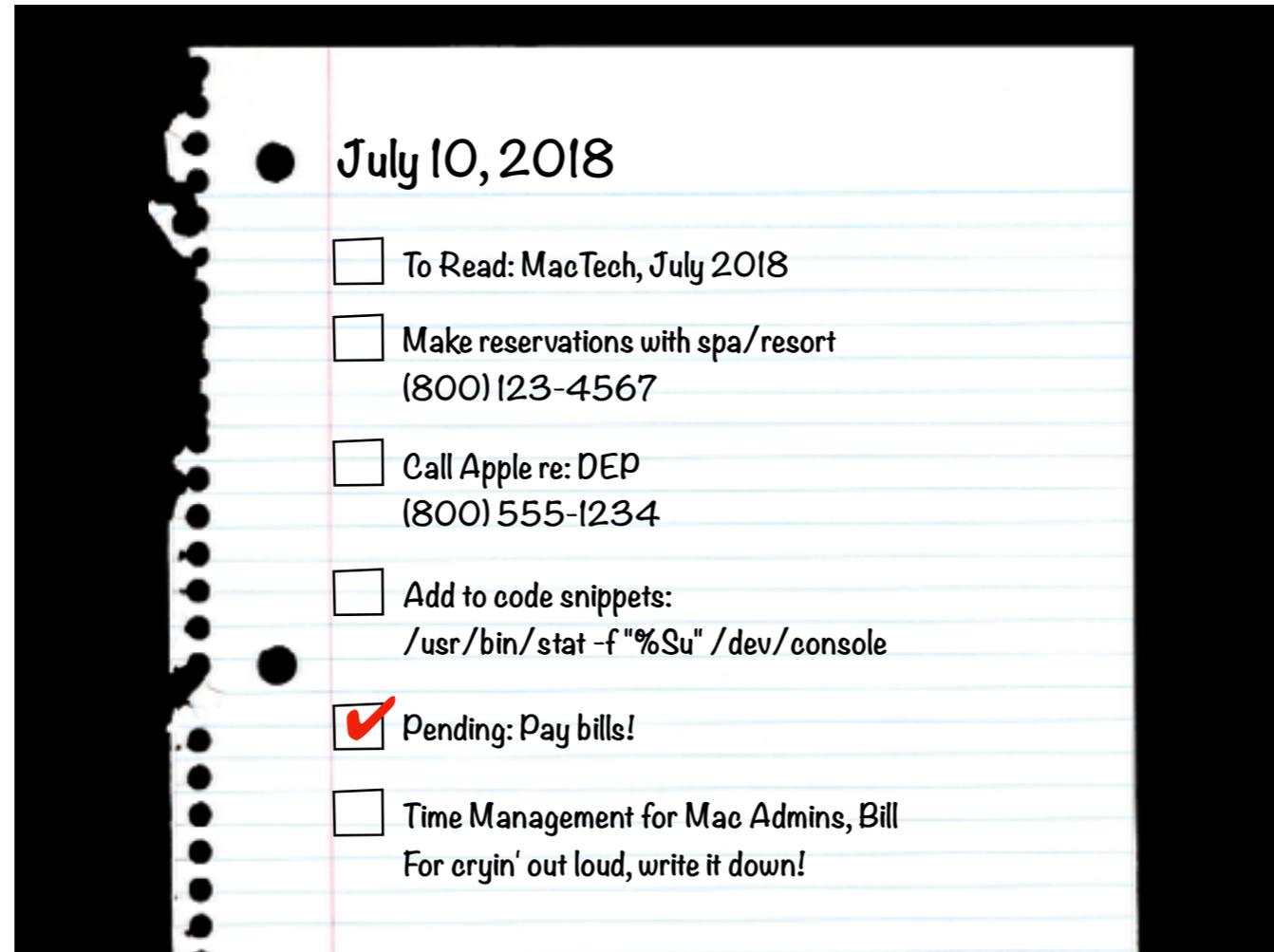


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So, for crying out loud, write it down!

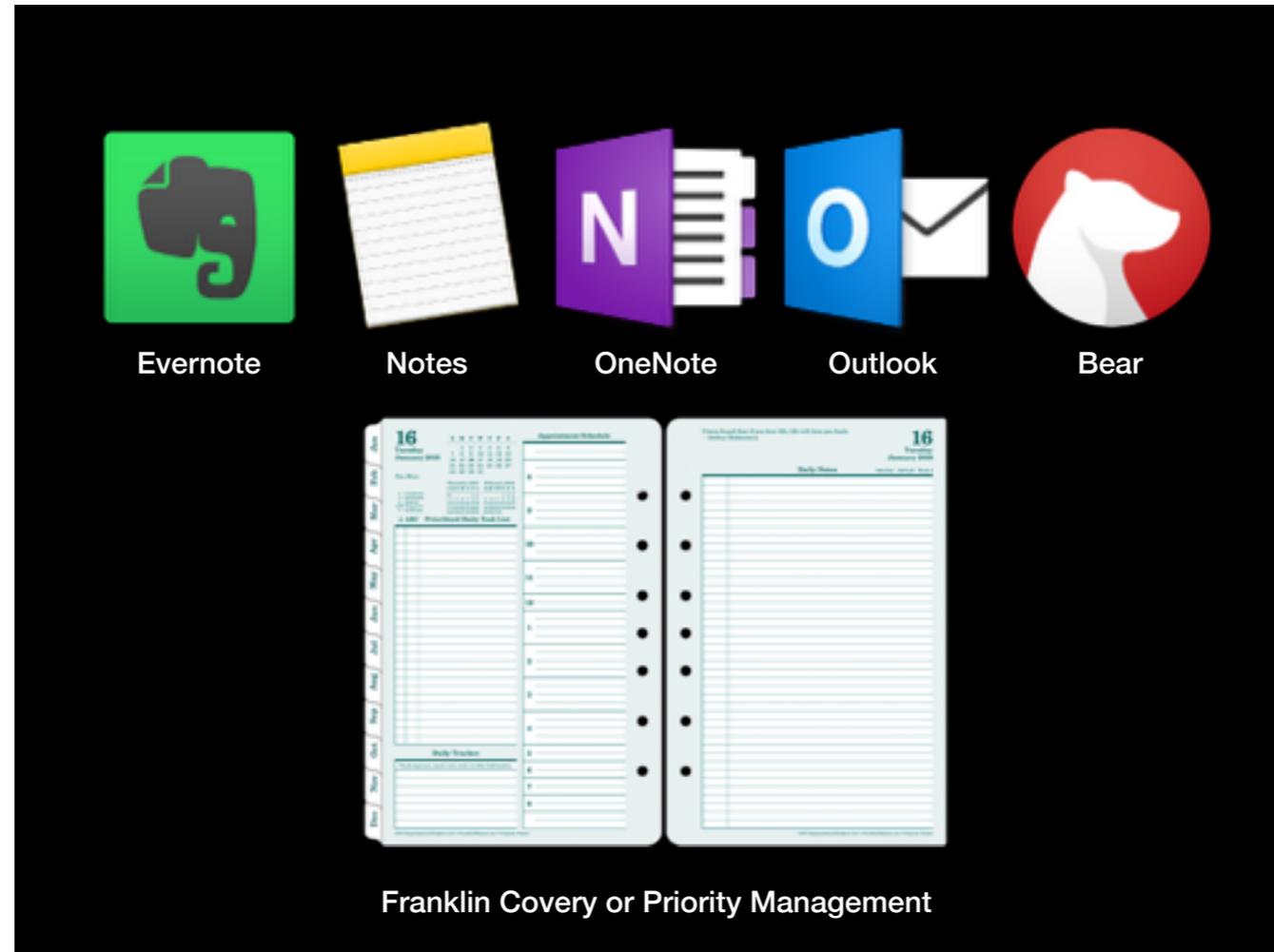
Starting **today**... Starting **with this workshop**...

I want you to start taking notes and writing down what you need to do.

Pick one place you trust.

You can write in a notebook. You can write in a planner designed for taking notes. You can choose a note-taking application.

Most importantly, pick **ONE place you trust** to keep this information and use only that one place. When I say "trust", I mean something other than a sticky note placed on your monitor or a quick jot on a notepad. And I mean **something you can keep with you at all times**.



If you choose to use an application (and I recommend you do), you can use:

- **Evernote**
- **Apple Notes**
- **Microsoft OneNote**
- **Microsoft Outlook's Notes feature**

or any application that syncs automatically across your devices. I like using **Bear Writer** because it supports markdown.

We'll talk more about these and other apps toward the end of the workshop.

But, what if you can't use an app? What if your company refuses to buy the apps you want or refuses to let you sync notes? Then I recommend you go the route of a **proper paper planner**. Franklin Covey planners are probably the most common. Priority Management is another.

There's actually nothing cooler than being the "IT guy" who walks into a meeting and opens a notebook instead of a computer and begins writing things down. I did this a lot when folks thought I should be the **cutting edge computer guy**. But let's face it, the only reason anyone brings a laptop to a meeting is to check email. If the meeting organizer sees you taking notes, he or she is going to get the strong perception **that you care**.

In a while, we're going to walk through how to use a paper planner and see how we can adapt it to apps.

habit

Again, getting started... starts with getting... into the **habit** of taking notes.

Does anyone know how long it takes to form a habit?

- Common convention is 21 days but it could take longer due to something called **automaticity**.

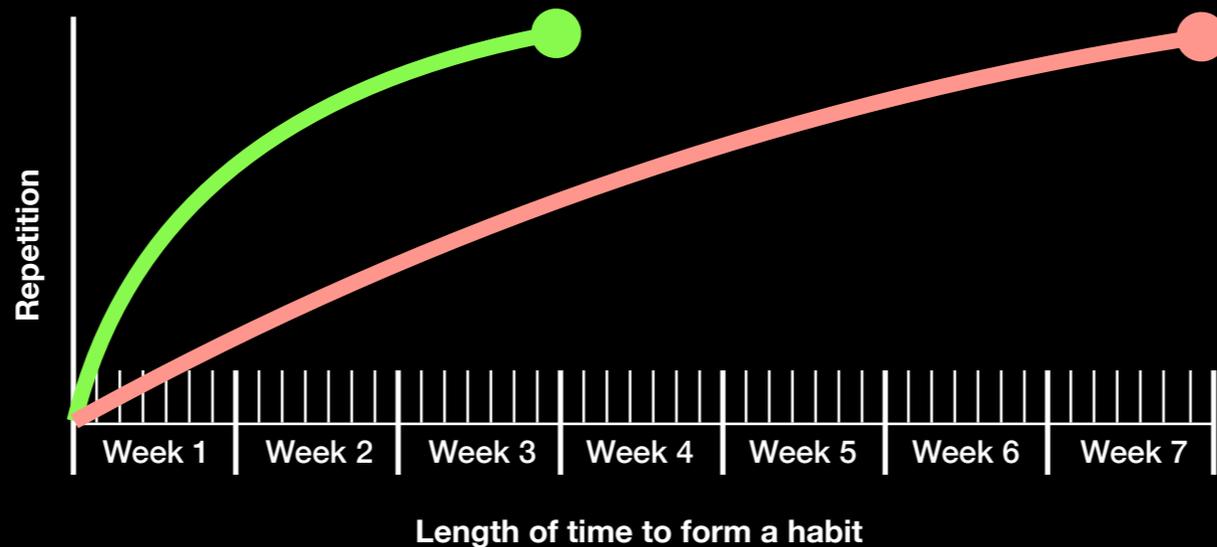
automaticity

We'll come back to habit in a while.

But does anyone know what automaticity means or want to take a stab at what it means?

automaticity

/ah tuh muh TIS i tee/ • Greek • noun
the notion of acting without thinking



Automaticity is the driving force behind a habit. It's the idea that you do something without thinking. It becomes automatic.

You **develop** a habit by **conscientiously** doing something over and over until it becomes automatic to you — **repetition**.

Who can tell me what mantra might fit that scenario?

- **Practice makes perfect**—repeating something until you get it right every time.

What's interesting about this is the more you repeat an action in the **earlier stages** of trying to develop a habit, **the quicker you'll form the habit**.

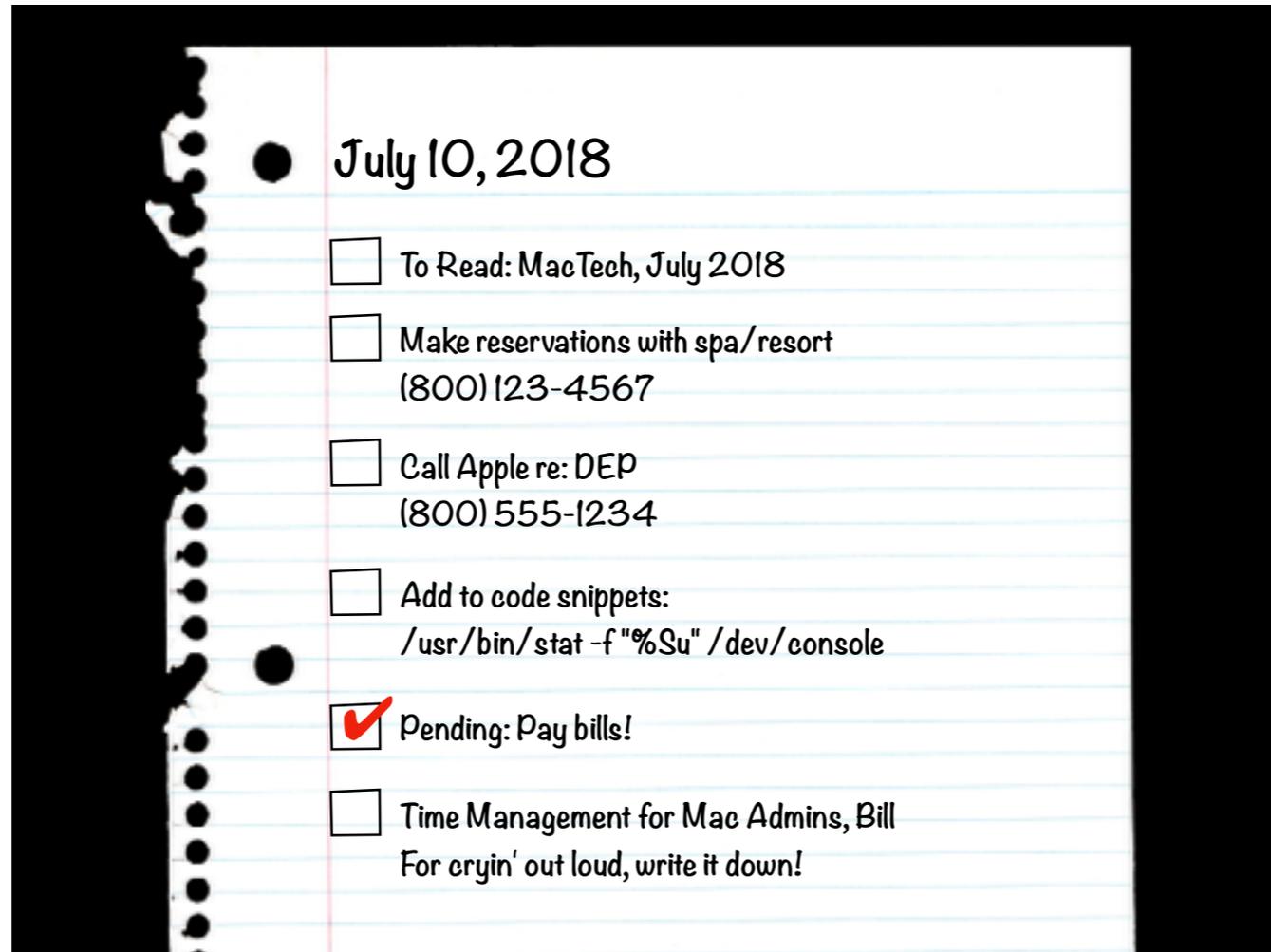
For example, if you **start taking daily notes** today and keep doing that every day, you'll likely reach automaticity very quickly.

However, if you start taking daily notes today but **skip a day or two or miss several days in a row**, it'll take you a lot longer to form the habit. Your resolve will take **more** effort over that time.

The sooner you start working to establish a routine that helps you form the habit the better your results.

Now, what mantra am I thinking?

- The early bird gets the worm.



OK, who can tell me why we need to take notes? What are some reasons?

- Don't forget important information.
- CYA
- Document your value
- We can remember complex information.

Let's try something. The left side of the room is allowed to take notes. The right side is not allowed to take notes.

Here are some numbers: **3 1 0 8 6 8 5 6 0 3 9 7 3 1 5 9 6 16 2**

Who on the right can repeat those numbers back to me?

Who on the left side can repeat those numbers back to me?

Why do you suppose that list of numbers was so difficult to memorize?

- Long list.
- No context around those numbers.
- Not relevant to me.

3108
685-6039
73159
6-16-2

I know those numbers like the back of my hand because they're all from my childhood.

If I put them in some sort of context like this, can anyone guess what they mean now?

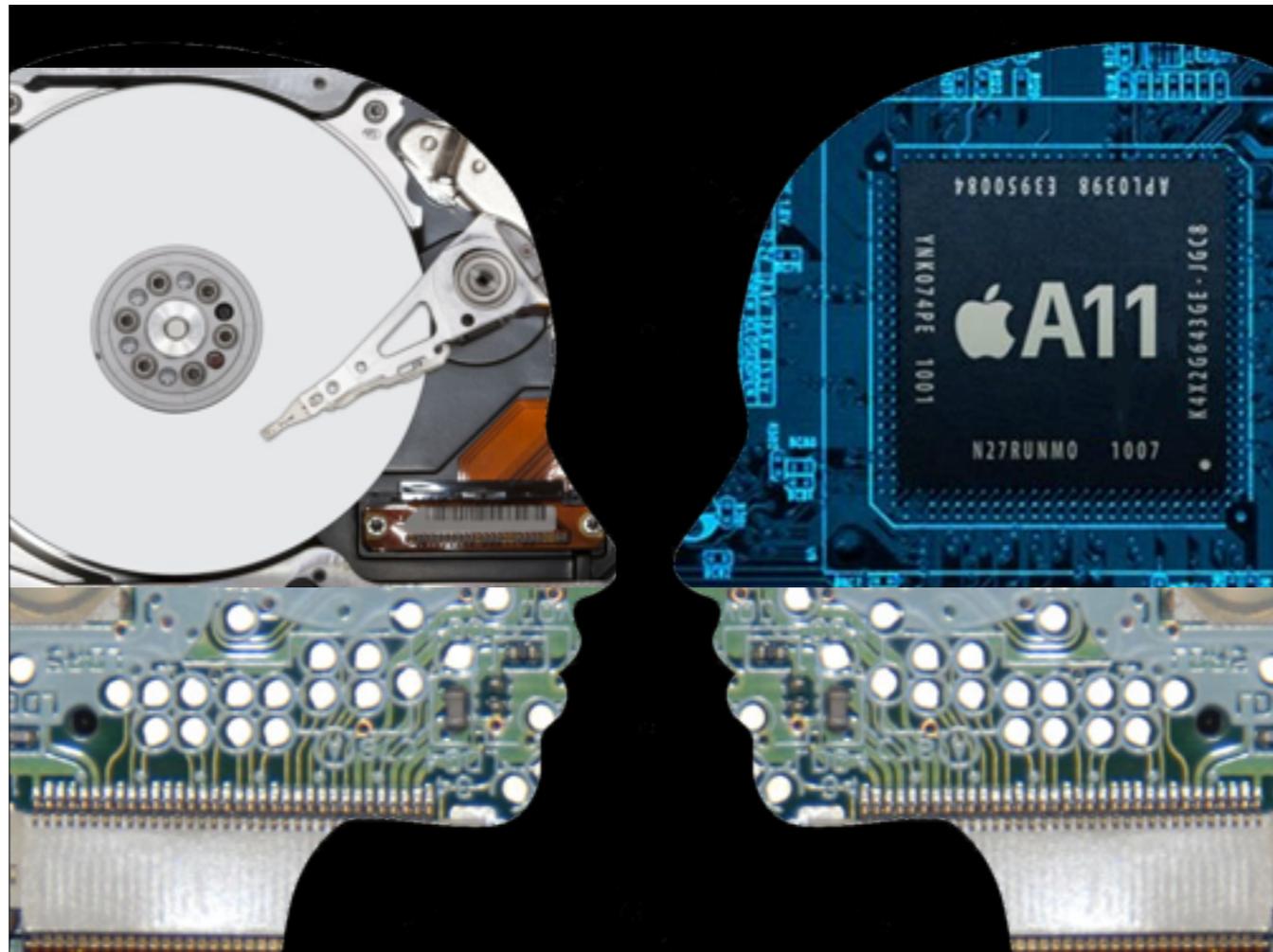
3108 was my house number growing up.

685-6039 was my phone number.

73159 was my zip code.

6-16-2 was my high school locker combination.

Without relevance to you and without a format you recognize, information is difficult to process and store quickly in your brain.



Therefore, the primary reason you should get in the habit of taking notes is to convert **using your brain for storage** to **using it instead for processing**.

Someone tell me what happens to your Mac when its drive gets too full?

- It slows down.
- You can't add more data.

Your brain's short term storage can only hold so much information.

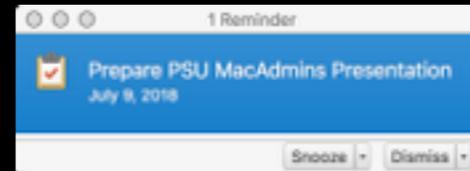
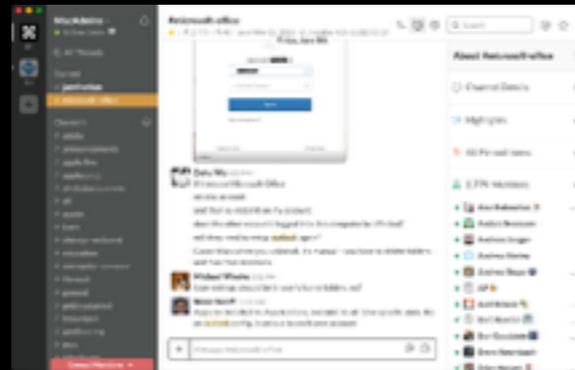
Now, someone tell me what we do when our Mac's drive gets too full.

- Copy files to external storage.
- We delete copied files and any other unneeded files and empty the Trash.

Apply this to real life. Have you ever gone to the grocery store just to pick up a couple things—like **milk** and **Diet Coke**? Two things—I can remember that. And then during the drive there, you think of something else—like salad mix. And that thought triggers the question, "What's for dinner tomorrow night?" And you add to the list in your head: spaghetti, pesto, mushrooms and chicken breasts. Then you think about dessert. One pint of peanut butter cup ice cream and another pint of chocolate chip.

Who can tell me what you start doing when you begin quickly adding stuff to the list in your head?

Distractions



Trying to process information while your brain is full **distracts you**. It **disrupts** your focus and attention.

Let's talk now about other distractions.

Our phone is probably one of the most annoying distractions we have because "we're not suppose to ignore it". Before we ever had voicemail, answering machines or call waiting, we had rules around using the phone.

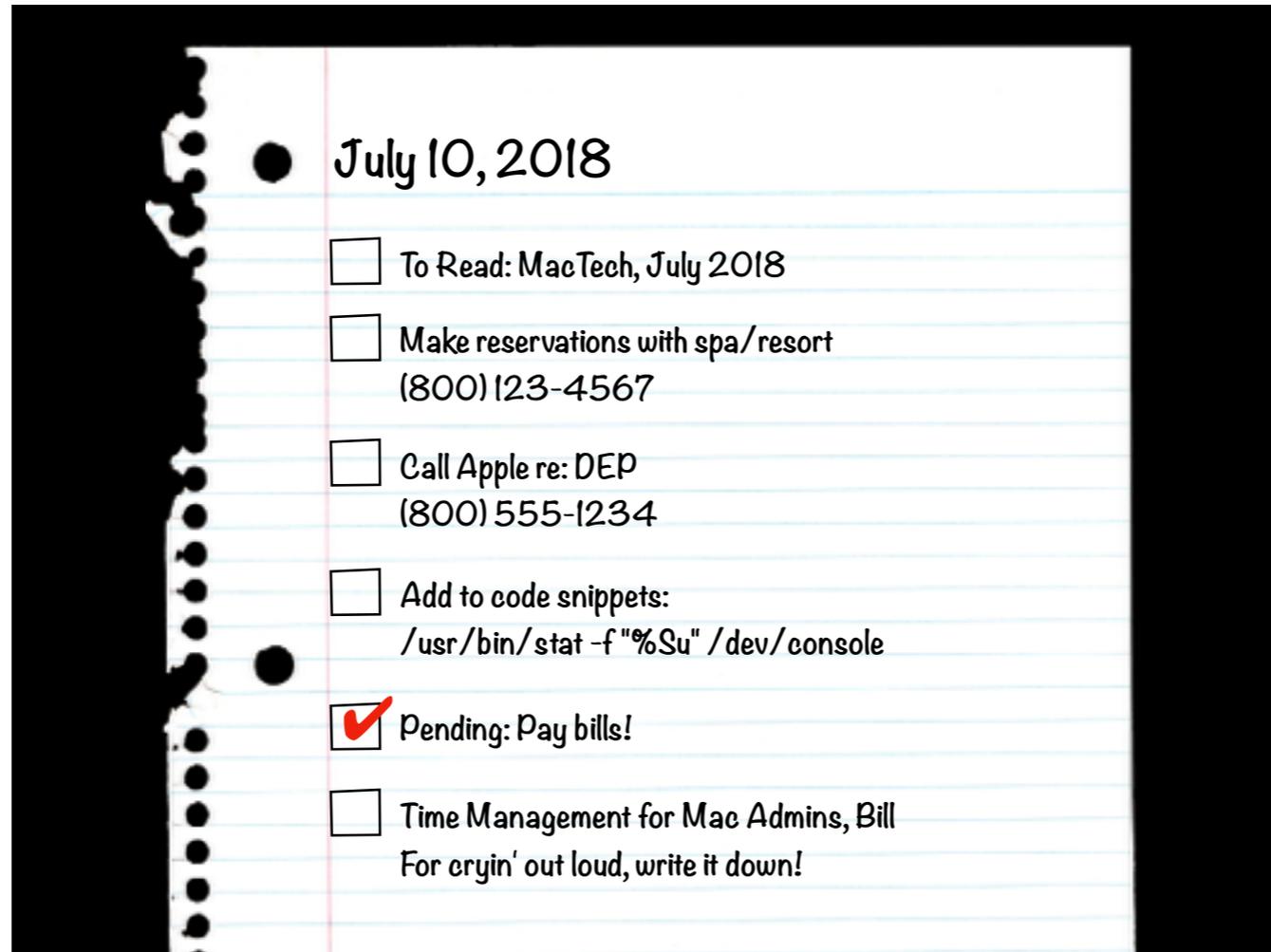
- If you're calling someone, let it ring at least 10 times before you hang up without an answer. That gives the other person time to answer the phone.
- If the phone rings, pick it up as soon as possible **because it might be an emergency!**
- Don't stay on the phone too long. Someone else might be trying to call **and it might be an emergency!**

We were conditioned to respond to phones even when we were in the middle of a conversation. Back then, when phones were physically attached to walls and the handset was tethered to the phone with a curly cord to keep you from stealing it, we had no other immediate form of remote contact.

Now that we have voicemail and text messages and chat apps and email and the good old fashion drop-by...

When your phone rings and you and I are discussing something, what should you do?

- Finish your current task, which is talking with me.
- Let it go to voicemail.



Next page...

As you check your voicemail, I want you to also log it in your notes for today. Your notes also become a call log, which is great CYA material.

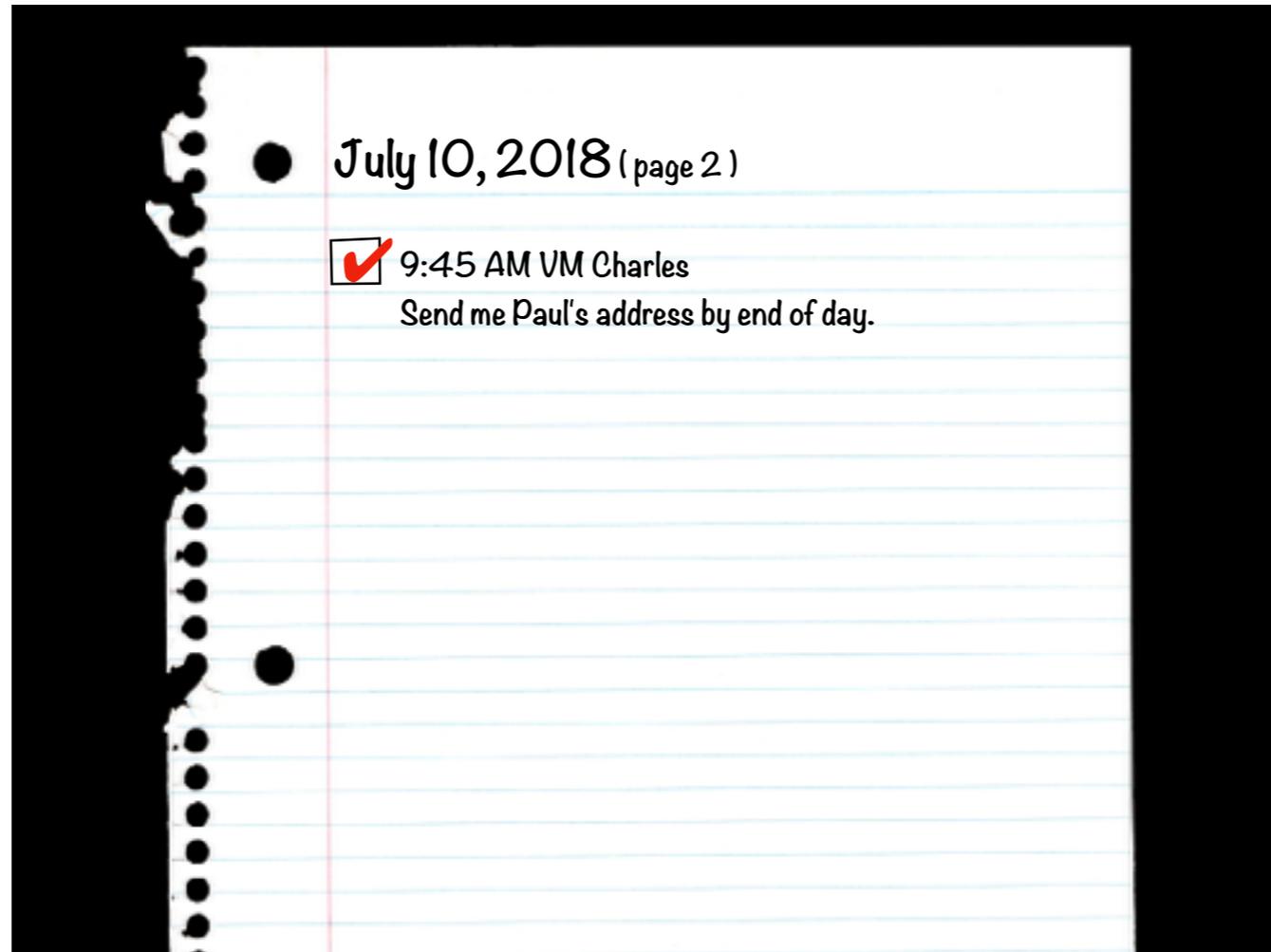
- **Include the time**
- **Include the location (in this case I'm using VM to indicate voicemail)**
- **Include the caller's name**
- **And the message**

Delete the voicemail and **stop that blinking light from distracting you!**

Now, what should we do with this new entry in our notes? Should we handle it right now or wait until later?

- Are we in the middle of another task or are we between tasks?

The best course of action is to get it off your plate as quickly as it was put onto your plate. I'm going to **choose to process it now** and email Charles the information he asked for.



Next page...

As you check your voicemail, I want you to also log it in your notes for today. Your notes also become a call log, which is great CYA material.

- **Include the time**
- **Include the location (in this case I'm using VM to indicate voicemail)**
- **Include the caller's name**
- **And the message**

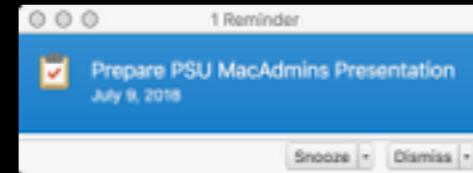
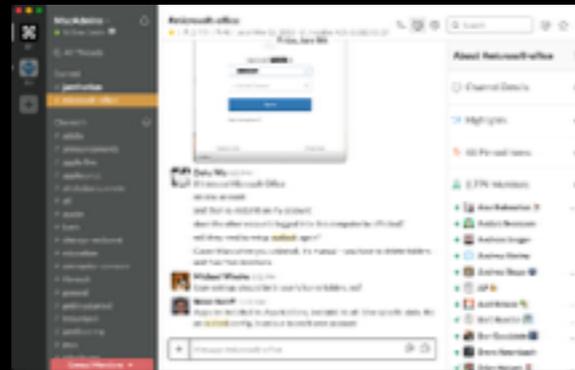
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- Are we in the middle of another task or are we between tasks?

The best course of action is to get it off your plate as quickly as it was put onto your plate. I'm going to **choose to process it now** and email Charles the information he asked for.

Distractions



How about co-workers?

They stop by our desk or sometimes they stick their legs out to trip us as we're rushing by.

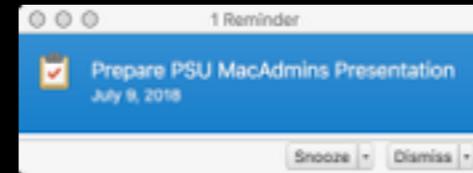
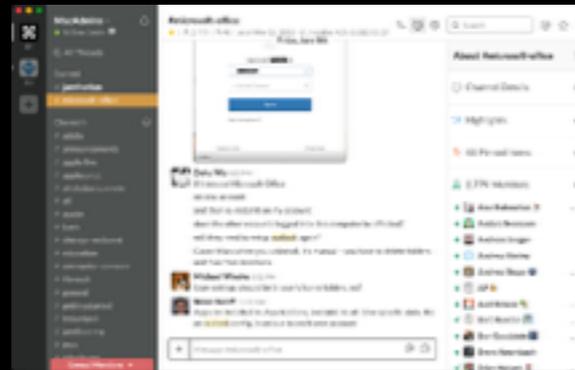
We've built up some interesting defenses against them like putting on headphones or snagging a conference room to get away from our desks.



If you're like Wally, you've probably discovered the idea of the **urgent-looking walk**. This is the behavior you exhibit when you need to get from one place to another, but you just know someone's going to stop you and ask a question or ask you to do something.

You do your urgent-looking walk to give the impression you're in a hurry and can't be stopped.

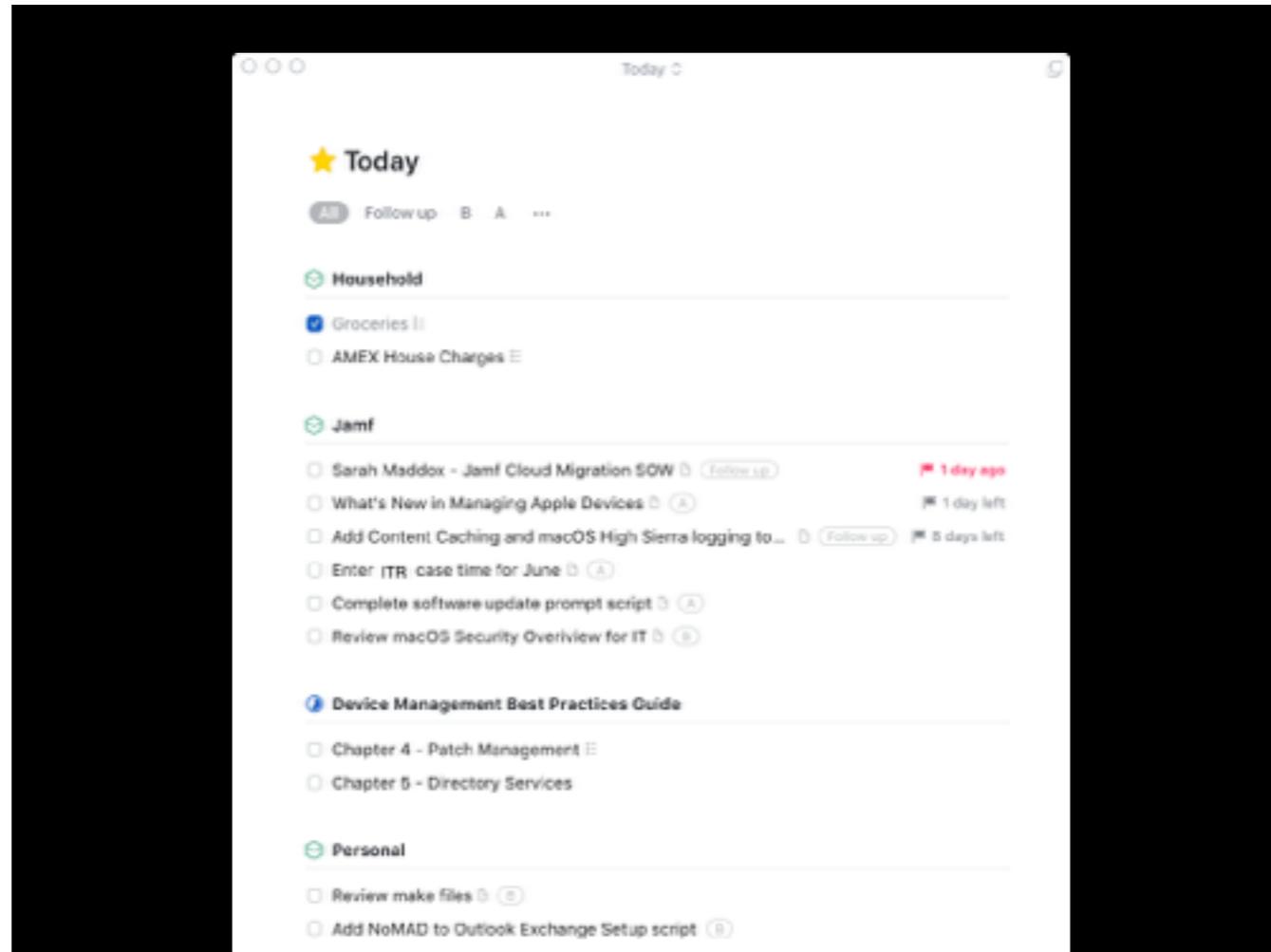
Distractions



And some people know they can bypass calling the Help Desk and just come straight to you because you never say "no".

There's an art and a balance when dealing with people. Ultimately, we are support, even if we're "Tier 3" and we have to acknowledge people will interrupt us. How we handle them sets the tone of the conversation.

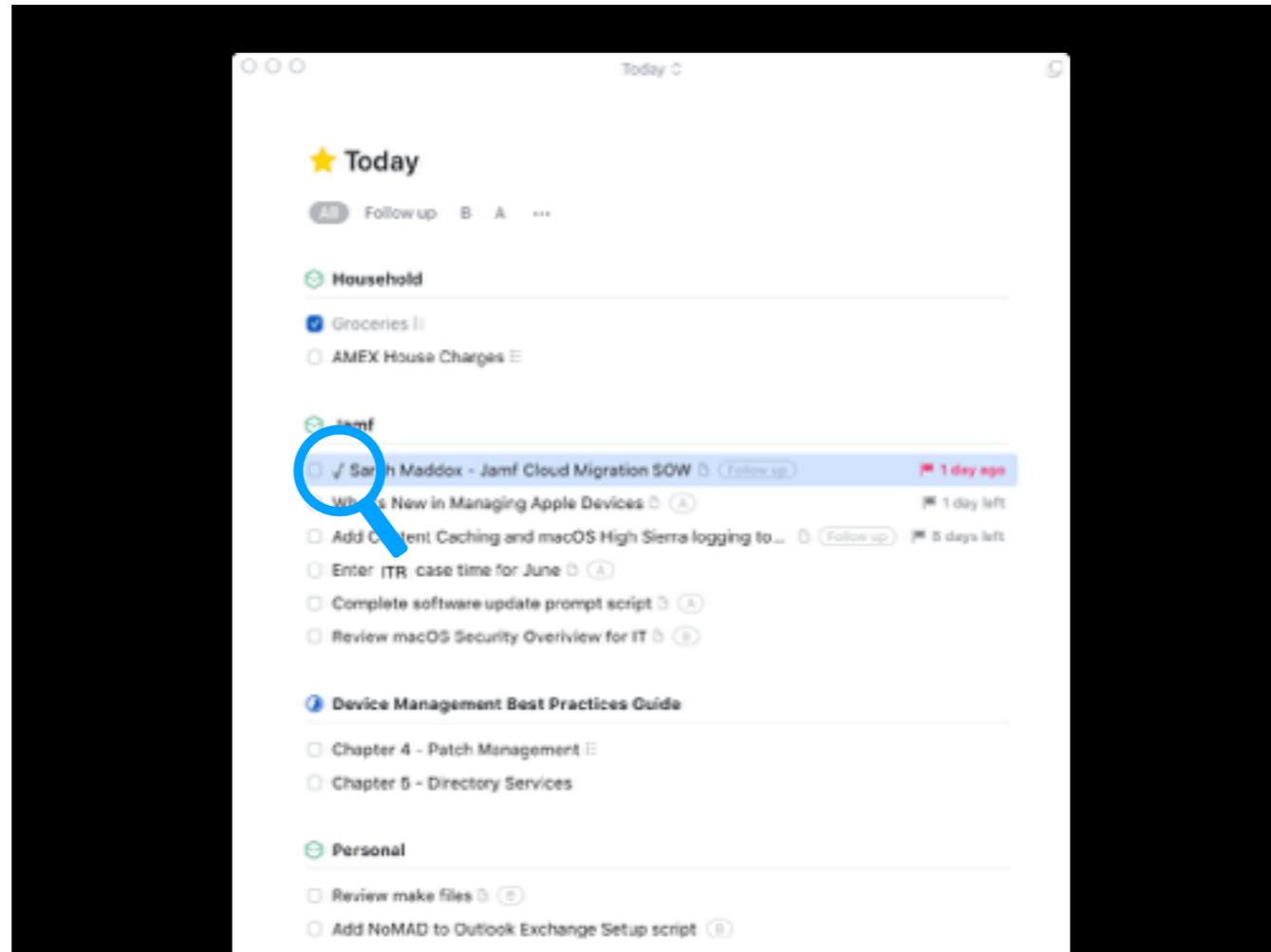
Unlike voicemail, when someone stops by your desk, you have little control over when the conversations starts. If you're in the middle of a task, that conversation may very well take you away from it.



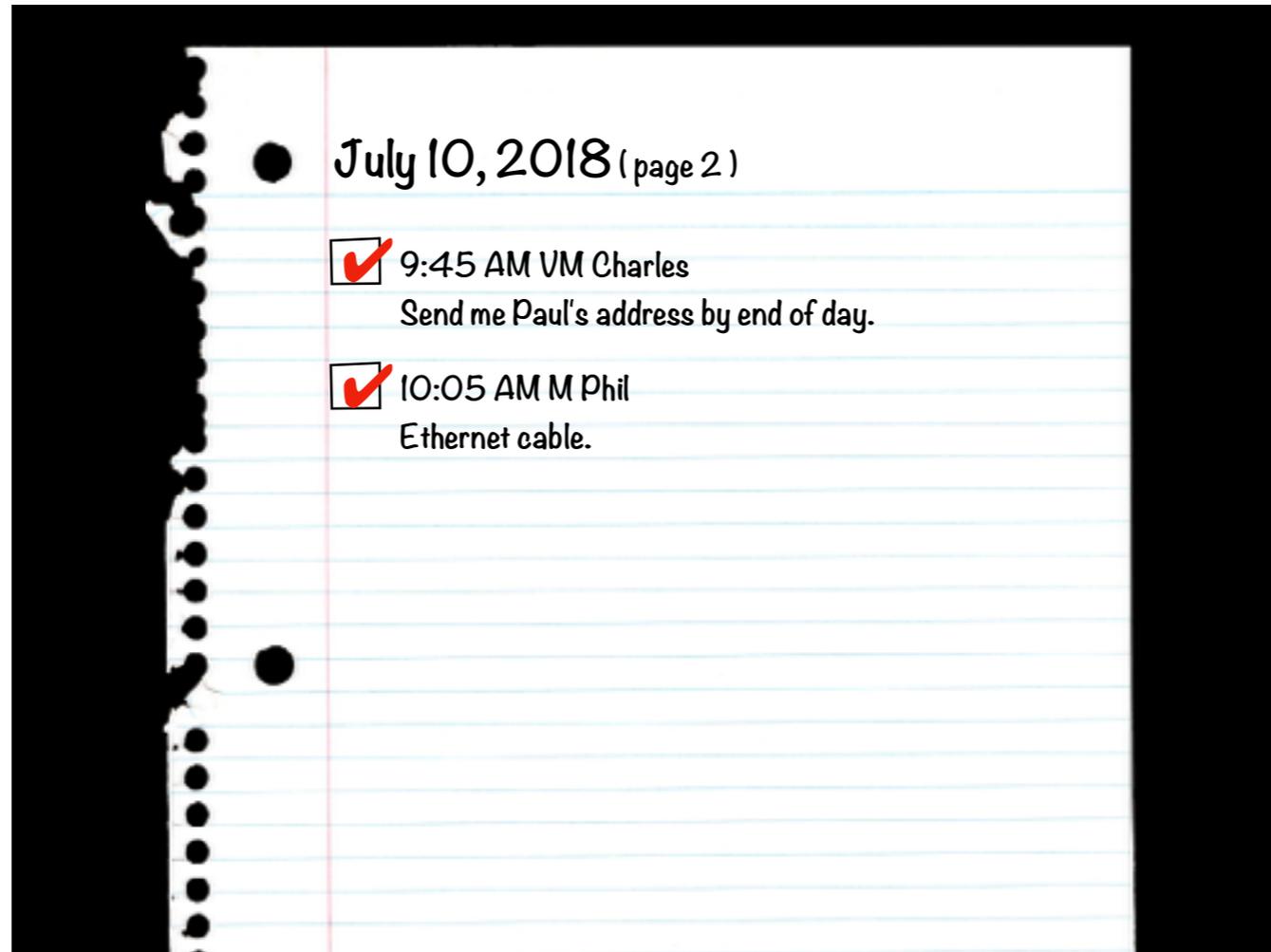
In a while we'll be talking about creating your to-do or task list for the day.

My application of choice for managing my tasks each day is Things. Here's what an average day of mine might look like.

As you begin processing your task list for today, take two seconds to mark in some way which task you're actively working.

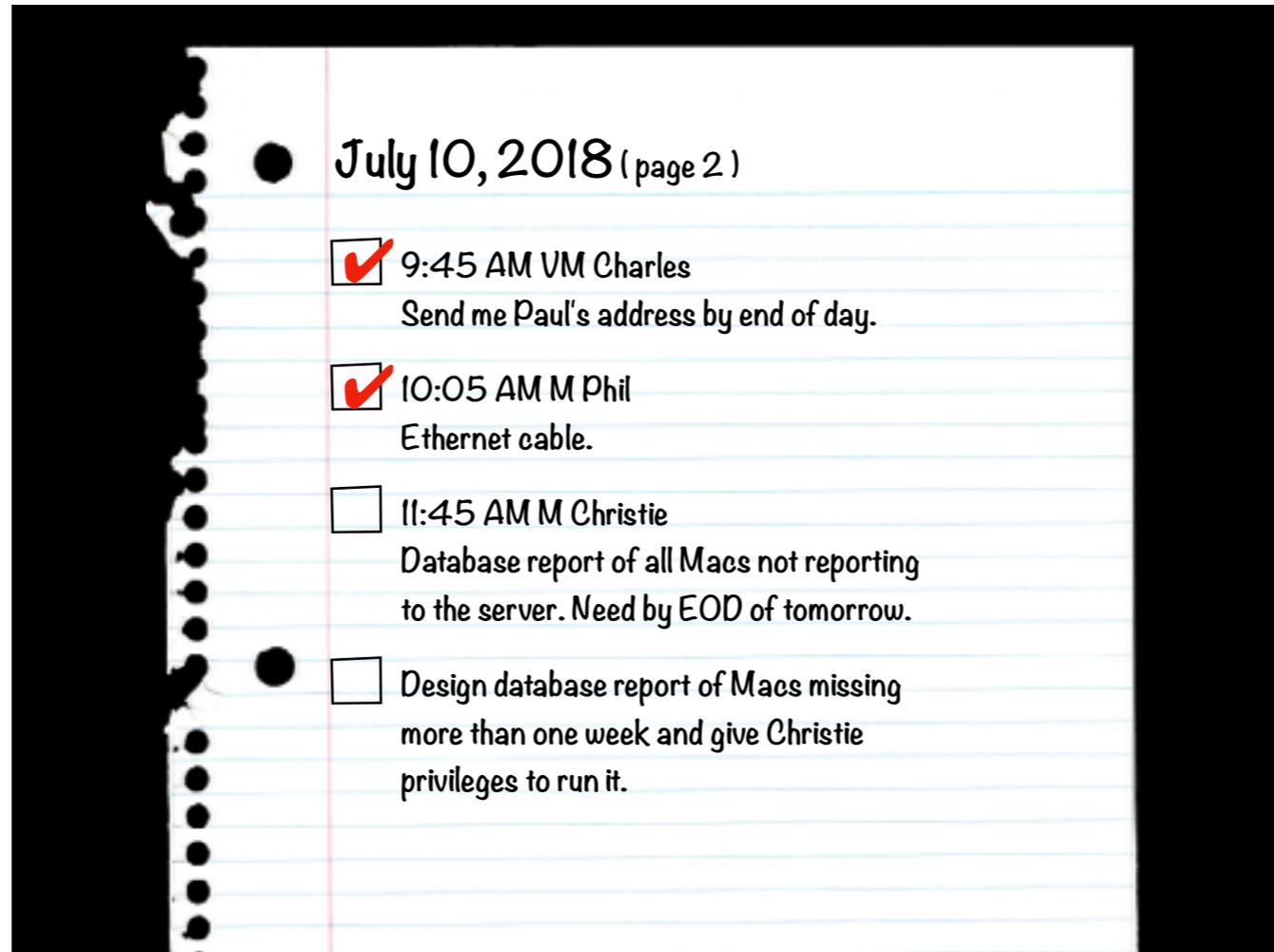


I like to use the Option + V keyboard shortcut to put a checkmark next to my task in progress. I'll get rid of it later when I complete the task, but just like Waldo sitting on our clean desk while ago, it's easy to see right away when you come back to your task list. You can pick up where you left off without having to ask, "What next?"



If the person who stopped by your desk simply needs an Ethernet cable from the closet, what's the best way to handle it?

- **First, log it in your notes.** In this case, I'm using capital M to denote a meeting with someone—it was in person.
- Next, unless you're working on something time sensitive or urgent, go get the cable and then come back and **mark it done.** Remember, try to get it off your plate as quickly as it was put on your plate.



A while later, Christie from the Help Desk comes to you and says she needs a report from your database.

What's the best way to handle it?

- **First, log it in your notes.**

- This time, you may want to ask Christie when she needs the report because it's going to take a little while for you to write the query and format the information. In this case, she says by the end of tomorrow is fine.

You might also ask what she's going to do with the report. **Why's that?**

- Do I need to save the query for another report later?
- Can I facilitate Christie helping herself next time by giving her access to generate her own reports?

In this case, Christie has been asked to follow up with users about Macs that haven't reported to the server for more than a week. Here, we have an opportunity to not only save **you** time in the future by generating a reusable report but you can save **Christie** time too by **giving her access** to run that report herself and not have to interrupt you for a new one every week.

Always look for opportunities to save time. Those are the opportunities where your time is best spent.



The Time Management for System Administrators book also has a great suggestion for IT groups where you and your co-workers take turns throughout the day to handle the drop-bys. While one person is responsible for all drop-bys, everyone else can do project work without getting interrupted.

If you know drop-bys are going to regularly happen, turn it into a positive experience for everyone by taking this idea a step further and creating a Tech Bar.

Have **someone** in your group attend to the area while the rest of you work on project work.

Create **a comfortable waiting area** to help relax people who are probably a little upset that their computer isn't working.

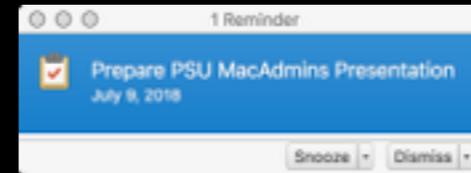
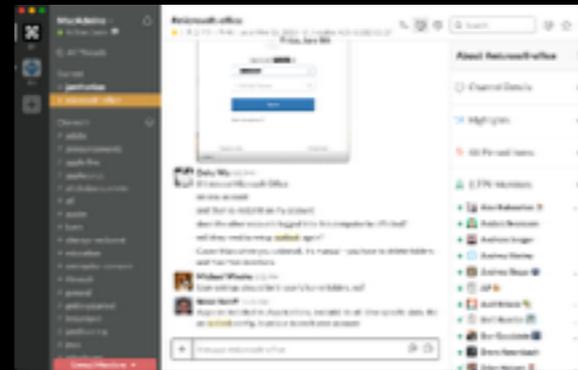
And I love the **kiosks** here in the background for people who need access to a computer now. At minimum, they can check email.

Who here has something like this or a Tech Bar concept already in place?

What do you think of it and what do your users think of it?

I'll give a shoutout to **Damien Barrett** who will be presenting "Building a Junior Mac Genius Bar" on Thursday at 3:15 p.m. While the session is targeted at education admins and recruiting students to help other students, the concept of reducing your own distraction by standing up a Tech Bar still applies.

Distractions



The top half of this screen is more about distractions caused by people. The bottom half is about distractions you cause yourself on your computer or other devices.

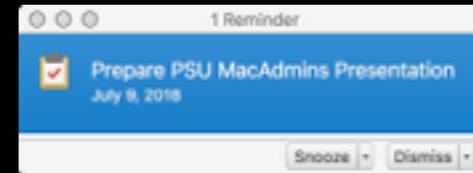
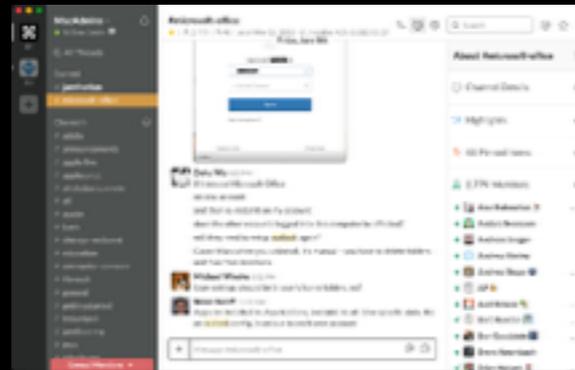
You might set Outlook to remind you of a task. If you can't work on that task right now because you're working on another task from your to-do list, **what are you likely going to do when that reminder pops up?**

- You're going to snooze it. And it's going to pop up again some later time.

What should you do with it?

- Put it in your notes.

Distractions



And what about all those notifications at the bottom from your phone and mail applications?

Doesn't that Gmail icon just make you cringe a little! Can you feel your blood pressure going up just by looking at it? **That's over 13,000 unread messages!**

Are you ever going to read those?



What does Magic 8-ball say about you reading all those emails?

Not only are those notifications distracting you, they're making you feel like you're under water, out of control, too far behind to ever get caught up!

Here's one for our notes...



What does Magic 8-ball say about you reading all those emails?

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Here's one for our notes...

● July 10, 2018 (page 2)

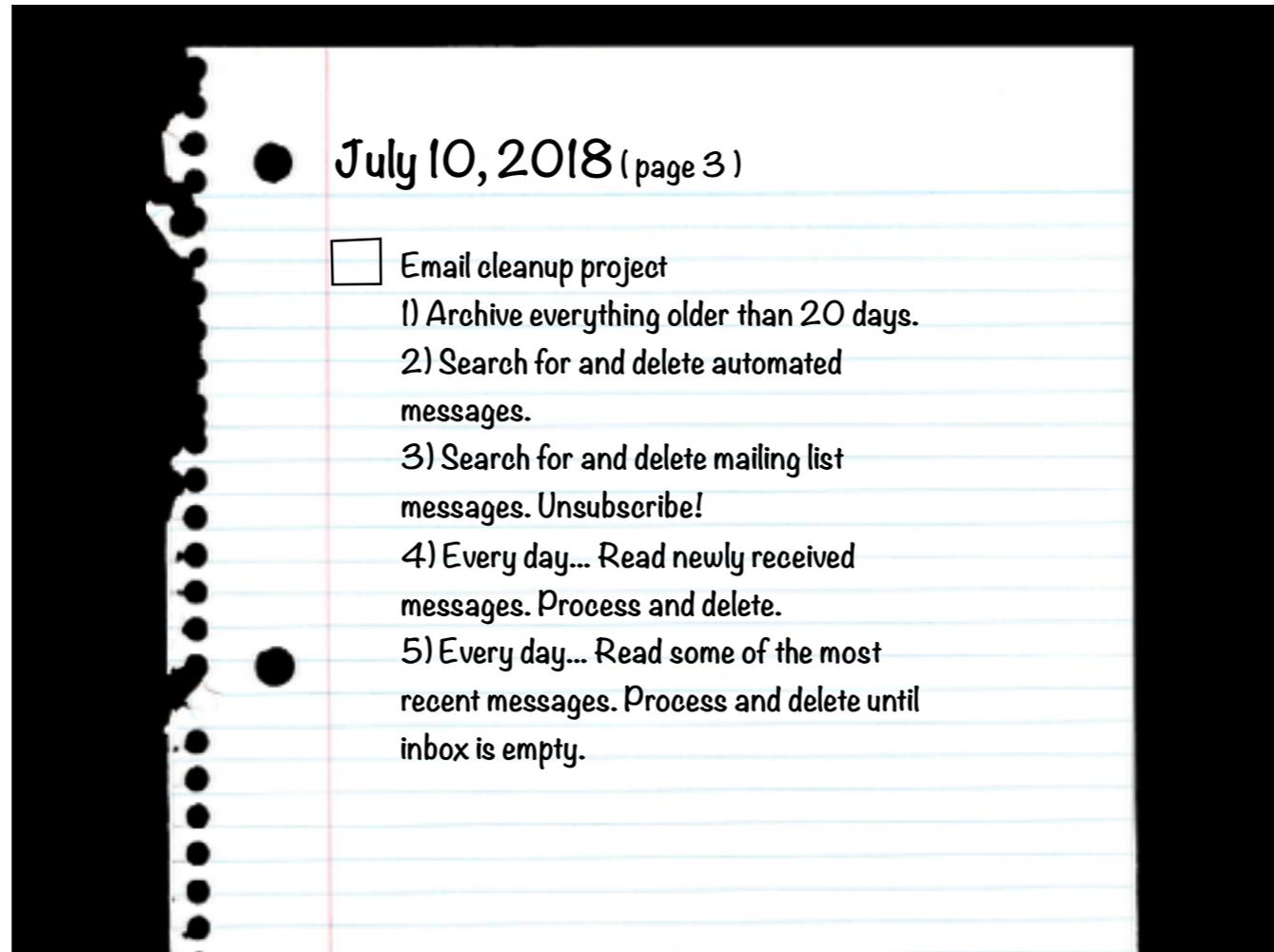
9:45 AM VM Charles
Send me Paul's address by end of day.

10:05 AM M Phil
Ethernet cable.

11:45 AM M Christie
Database report of all Macs not reporting
to the server. Need by EOD of tomorrow.

● Design database report of Macs missing
more than one week and give Christie
privileges to run it.

This one's going to take yet another page...



First, archive everything old than 20 days. Get those messages out of the Inbox and reduce the number of messages to those that are most current. Anything older than 20 days, someone has either given up or contacted you a different way.

Next, search for automated messages like those from server alerts. Anything more than a day or two old is outdated and useless. You've probably already heard the website is down.

Get rid of mailing list messages and while you're at it unsubscribe from them if you're not reading them every day!

Now, here's where we begin to whittle down the number:

From now on, you'll read and process every new email you receive each day.

- Don't leave a message from today in tomorrow's inbox!
- Delete what you don't need to keep.
- Add to your daily notes what you need to do.
- Archive important messages outside of your Inbox—I have a folder named "Archive". That's where every message goes after I've processed it.

Then, every day, starting with the newest messages you've kept in your inbox from the past 20 days, I want you to process them and then delete them or archive them. If you only do one old message per day, you'll still eventually **end up at...**

Inbox Zero

- Delete it - or Archive
- Delegate it - forward to someone else
- Respond to it
- Defer it - add to Daily Notes
- Do it

Don't use your Inbox as your task list!

Inbox Zero.

Who can tell me what that is and why it's a good idea?

- The concept of Inbox Zero is simple: Every day, by the end of the day, all your mail is processed and converted into **actionable items**. All processed mail is moved out of the Inbox. You can archive it, delete it, whatever you want. Just don't leave it in the Inbox.
- If you check your email, you process it. "Processing" means you're going to **Delete** it, **Delegate** it, **Respond** to it, **Defer** it until later (which means you put it in your Daily Notes) or **Do** what it's asking right now.
- It eliminates cluttering and **distracting** emails so you can notice and process important emails faster.
- Your focus is much sharper when you only have a handful of emails to deal with.

The best piece of advice I can give you about your email is to **stop using your inbox as your task list!** Your inbox is for receiving information **only**.

Who feels like you can do this?

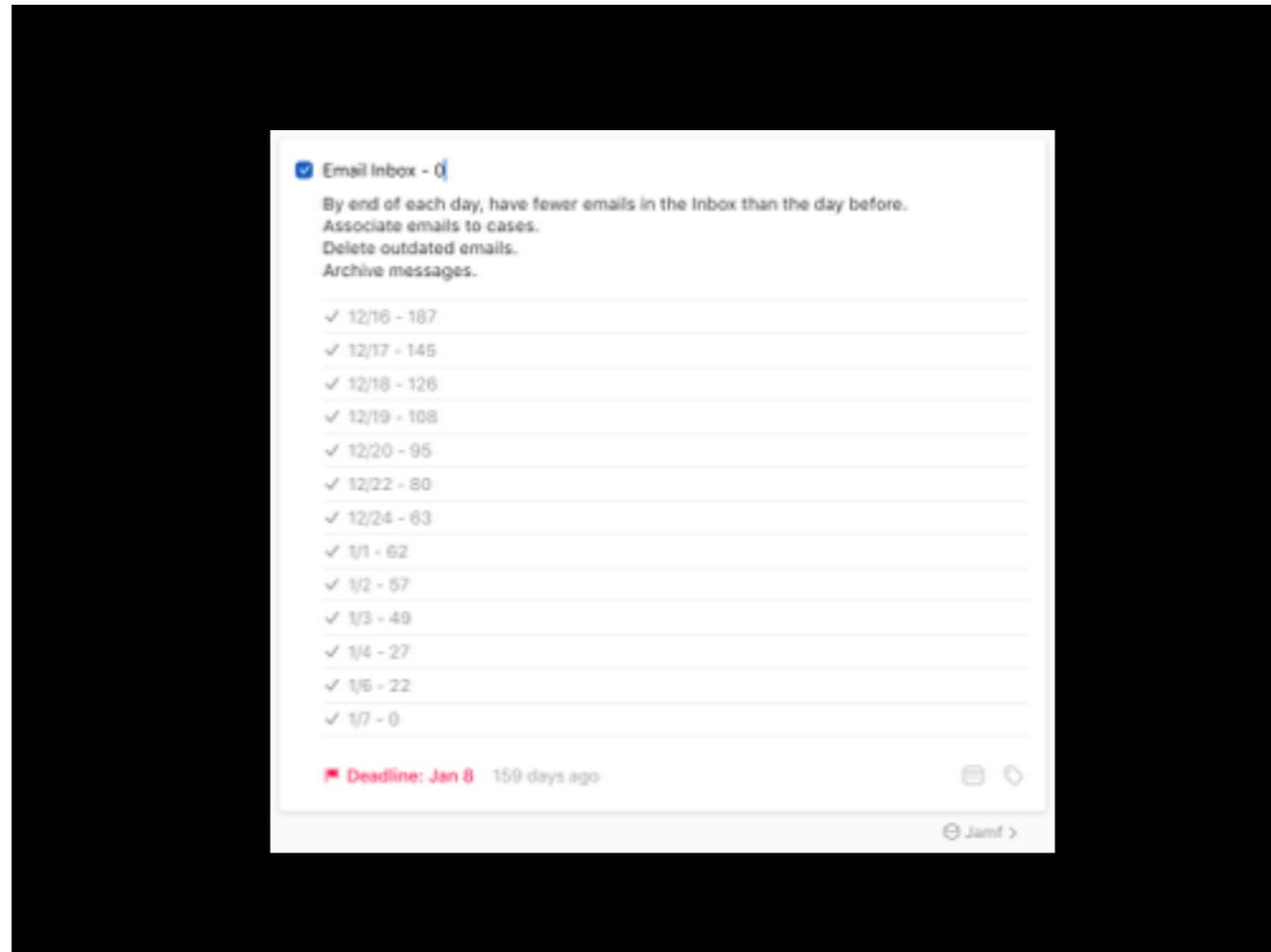
Who thinks it's too overwhelming?



What mantra might I use to help me tackle something that seems too big to overcome?

- **Put one foot in front of the other**
And soon you'll be walking 'cross the floor
Put one foot in front of the other
And soon you'll be walking out the door

If the Winter Warlock can do it, so can you.



I did this back in December and kept a daily list of my progress in Things.

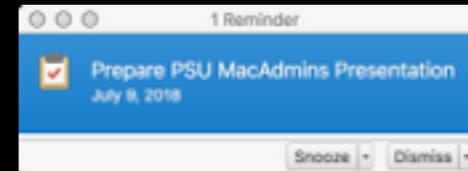
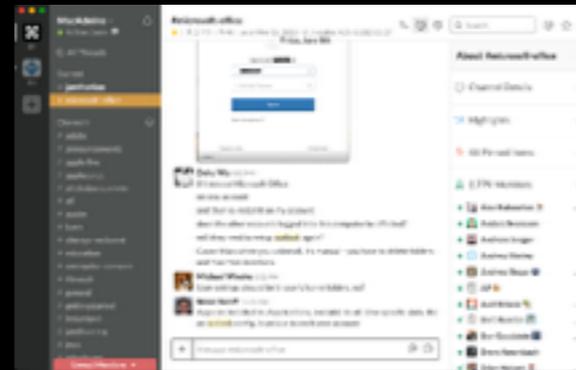
When I started, I had a little under 200 mail messages in my Inbox. I gave myself a deadline of a month and I figured I could process about 50 old messages per week. That was an average of 10 every day.

Some days I wiped out nearly 40 messages. Around the holidays, I didn't make any progress until the new year, but I at least kept my Inbox at break-even. It took me three weeks and it got easier and easier each day because I was processing messages that were getting older and older and had less importance as time went by.

Today, I still get my Inbox at zero by the end of the day. I'm conditioned now so that leaving just one or two for the next day makes me "uncomfortable". Maintaining your inbox should not be like dieting. Diets don't work because they don't have long-term impact. Only changing your behavior works to manage your Inbox. And that change in behavior needs to become a habit.

If I can do it, you can do it. You don't have to do it all at once. Just do enough to show you're moving in the right direction each day.

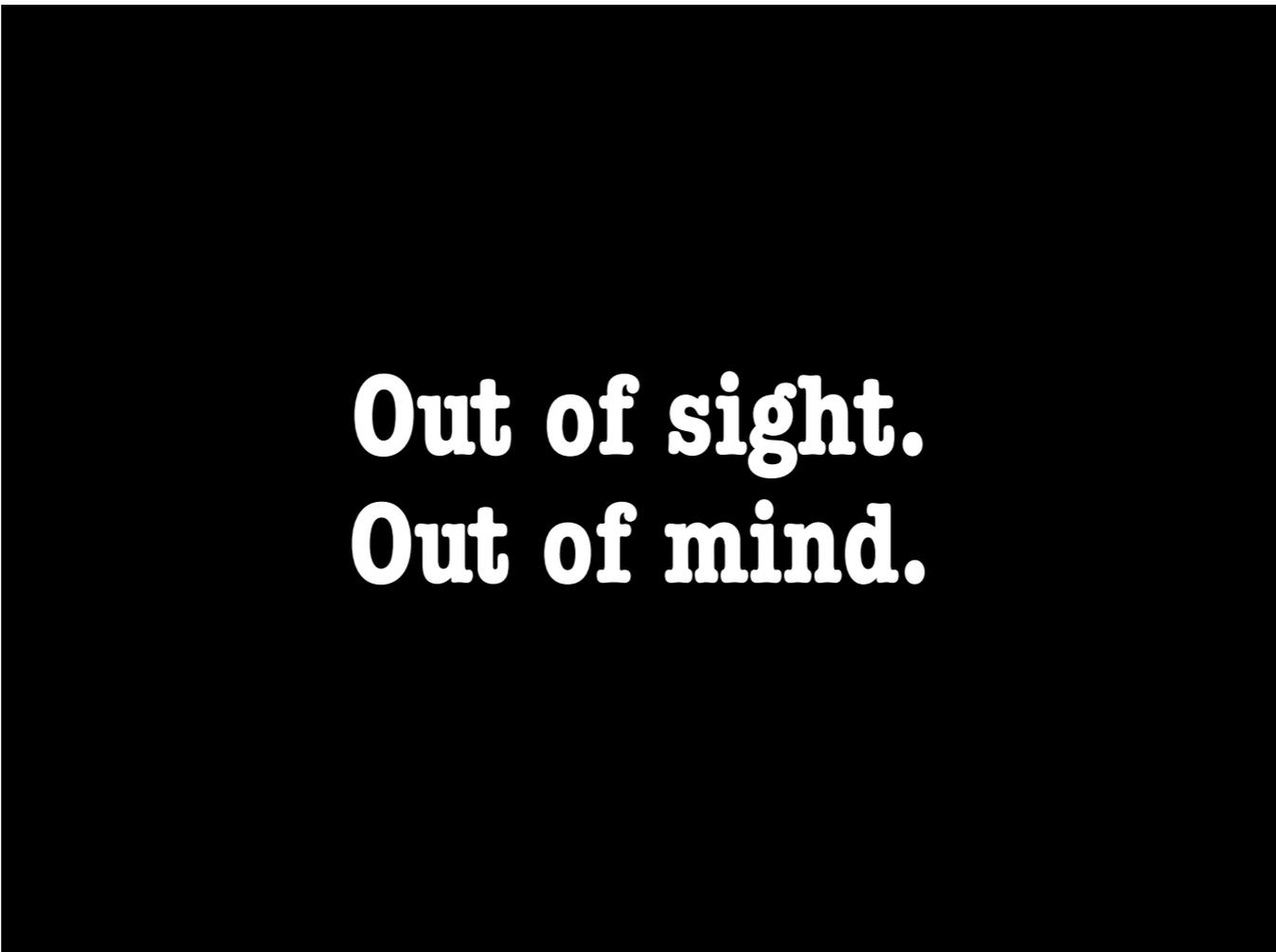
Distractions



Finally, what applications distract you the most? For me, it's probably Slack.

When I visit with customers, I have to quit it. I also quit TweetBot and HipChat and even Outlook. My job is focussing on my customers and helping them get what they need out of Jamf Pro. The last thing I want is someone to see my screen and notice I've been spending his or her time on social media and chat.

I actually find catching up on all that stuff in the evening while I'm having dinner at the hotel or in my room is kind of relaxing. And if something catches my eye in all of that, I just add it to my notes with a reference back to where I found it and I process it for later consumption.



**Out of sight.
Out of mind.**

To quote En Vogue: Free your mind and the rest will follow.

Acknowledge there will be distraction and acknowledge you can't stop things from distracting you.

If you've ever asked yourself if you can avoid distraction, the answer you should give yourself instead is to:

Plan on it. Plan on distraction happening.

Then plan on how to move it out of your sight, which in turn helps you get it out of your mind.



Taking Responsibility and Planning

So far, we've got three sheets of notes—**actionable** notes. **What** we need to do. Next, we'll cover **when** do them.

Last October, my friend Lori retired after 30 years of service with the National Guard. She's was Lieutenant Colonel and had been an Inspector General for the past few years. My partner and I flew with Lori and her partner to Missouri to attend the retirement ceremonies.

As an IG, she had about 20 direct reports, many of them much younger than she was. One of her reports was responsible for taking care of the ice cream and cookies for the reception after the ceremony. They'd ordered about 30 of the little ice cream cups with wooden spoons along with a couple trays of cookies.

The day before Lori's retirement, the corporal responsible for the food let Lori know there had been a mix up with the order. Apparently, the corporal had only seen part of the attendee and missed half of it. They really needed food for 60 people. The store providing the cookies and ice cream might not be able to get the amount of ice cream they'd requested.



Now, the corporal felt bad about the mistake. The mix up was her fault and she owned up and admitted it to Lori. She said, "If there's a problem, I'll take responsibility for the mistake."

Very mature of the corporal, right?



This was Lori's response: "Or you can take responsibility now and make sure it doesn't become a problem."

Managing your time and what you do comes with **forethought** not **hindsight**.

While you may feel managing your time is **out of your control** because...

people interrupt you and

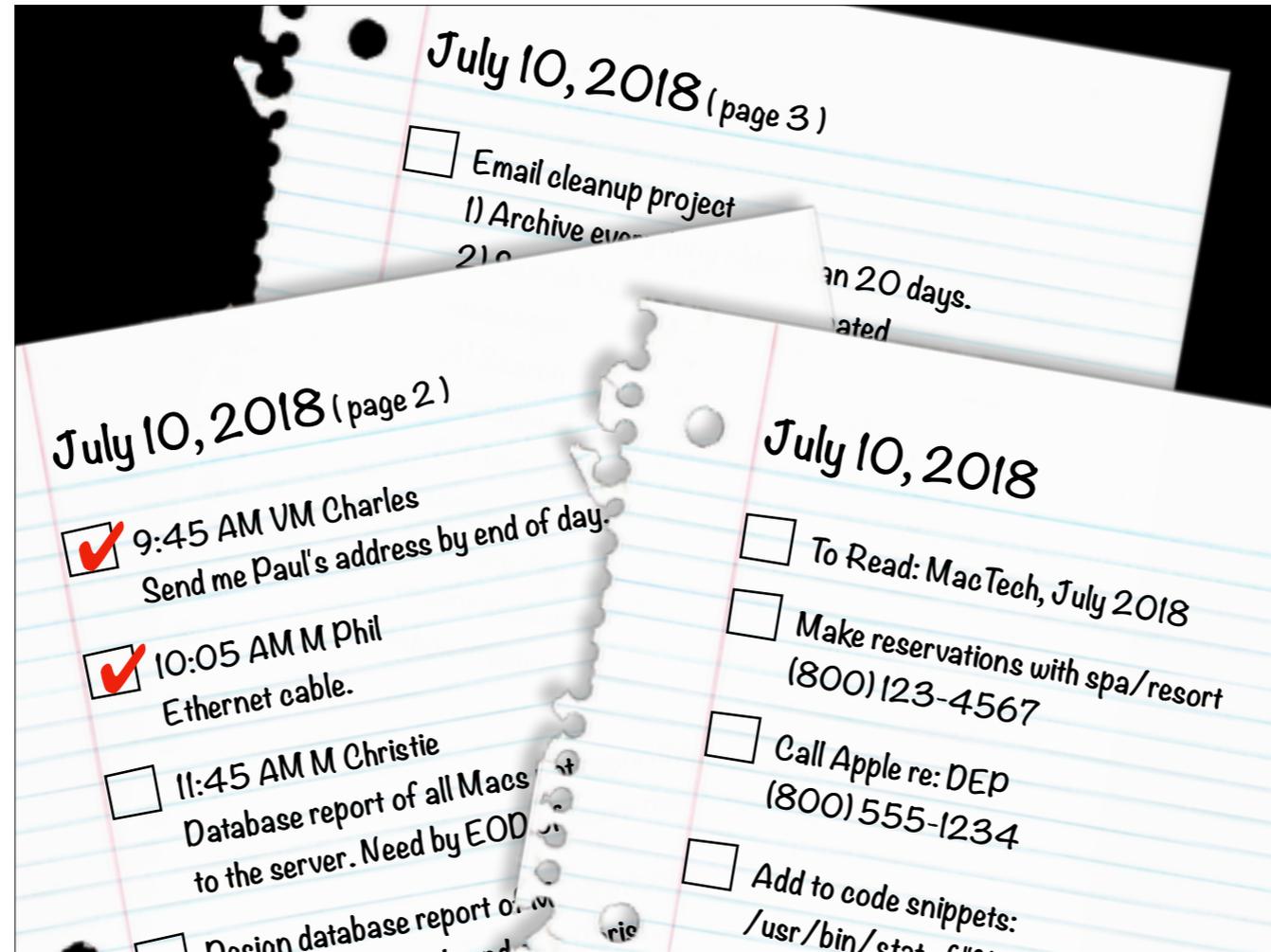
email interrupts you and

co-workers invite you to meetings and

you have someone else's deadlines to meet,

you still need to prioritize what you work on next.

And, yes, you may have to re-prioritize during the day because of some new development, but that's no reason not to make a plan for the day and there's little reason to let something slip if you can take care of it before it happens.



Up until now, I've been having you make notes throughout the day. And by the end of the day, we have three sheets of notes. And I've had you put little boxes next to each item. Some of them you've checked off already. Most of them, you haven't.

It might look like a task list, but it's not. Can anyone tell me why or why I'm having you put checkboxes here?

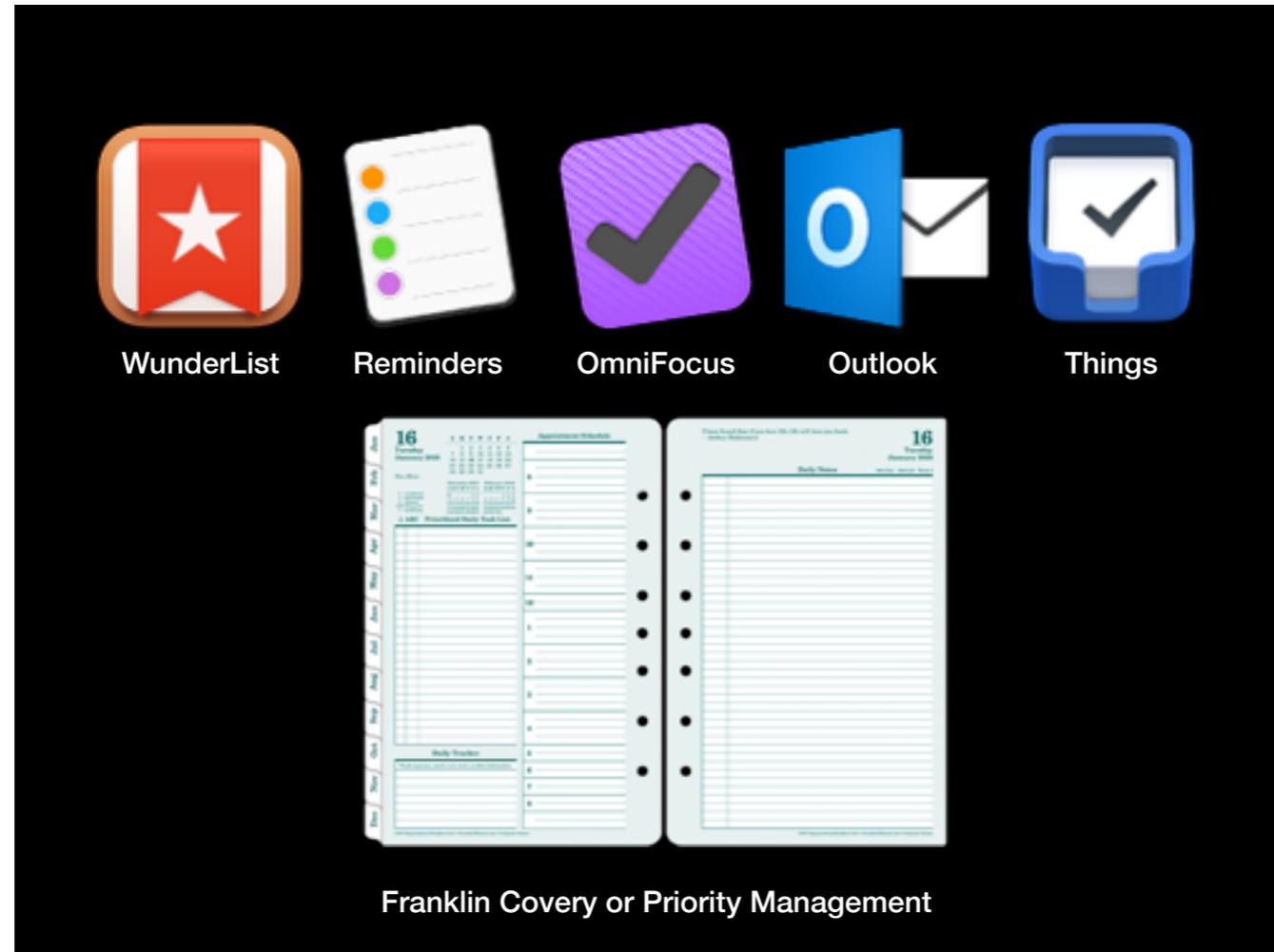
- It's only for one day.
- There's no priority to any of the items. What's high priority and what's low priority? We don't know.
- Checkboxes are a visual indicator the items have been processed.

Pick one place you trust.

In addition to our Daily Notes, **we need a task list**—your guide for what to do for the day. And you need a task list for several days or several weeks or even several months into the future.

Just like your notes, you need a place for your task list.

Pick **ONE place you trust** to keep this information and use only that one place. Again, when I say "trust", I mean something other than a sticky note placed on your monitor or a quick jot on a notepad. And I mean **something you can keep with you at all times**.



If you choose to use an application for your task list (and I recommend you do), you can use:

- **Wunderlist**
- **Apple Reminders**
- **Omni Focus**
- **Microsoft Outlook's Tasks feature**

or any application that syncs automatically across your devices. I like using **Things** because of its clean and very simple interface. And I appreciate that when I'm overdue on a task, it doesn't try to grab my attention with pop-ups and notifications that distract me from getting work done.

We'll talk more about these and other apps toward the end of the workshop.

And if you can't use an app for whatever reason, then I recommend you go the route of a **proper paper planner** like Franklin Covey or Priority Management.

Again, we're going to walk through how to use a paper planner and see how we can adapt it to apps later on.

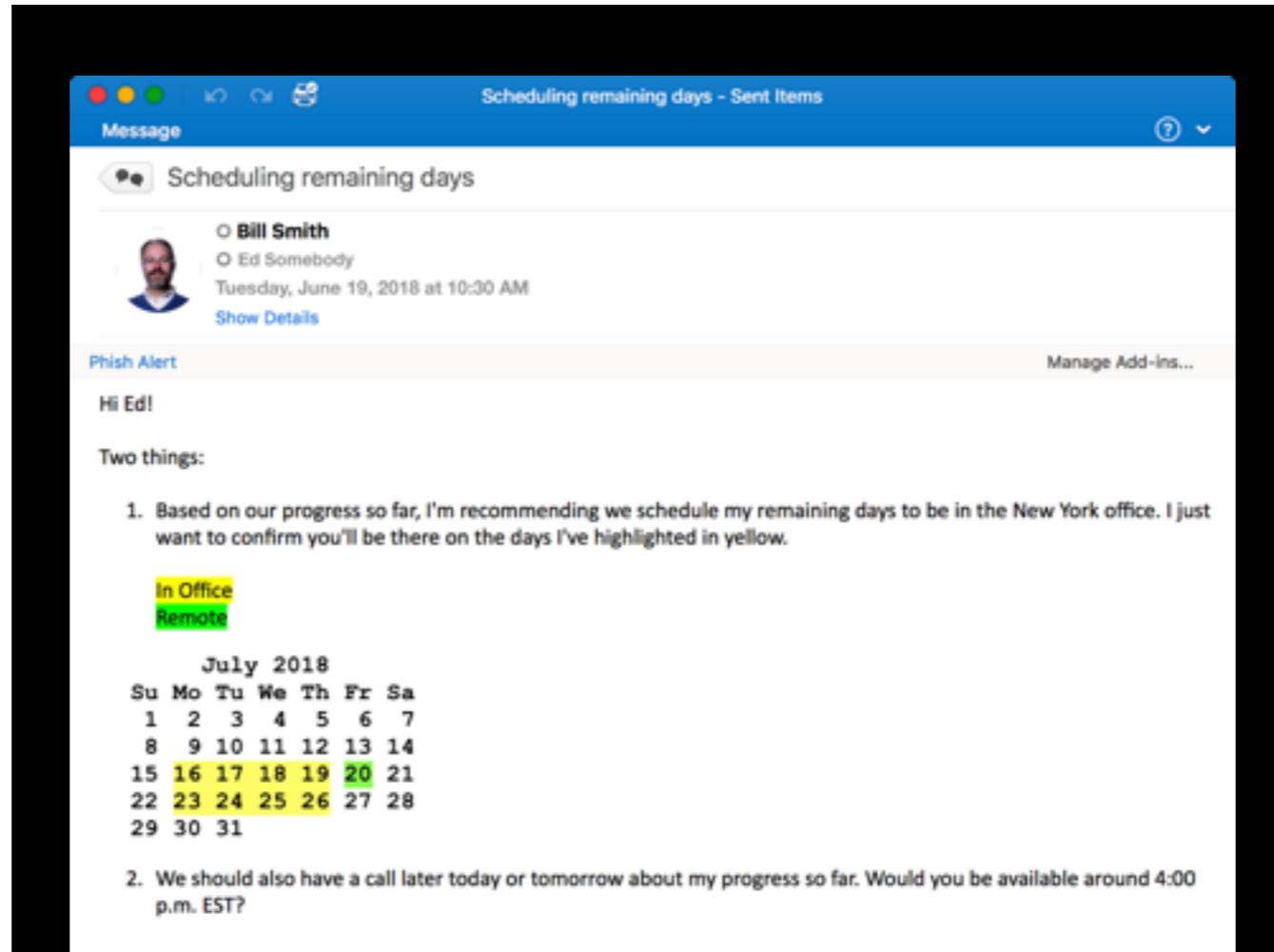
**Communication happens
when I know
that you know
what I know.**

But first, let's talk about **taking responsibility** and let's start with **communicating**.

This is a mantra I developed years ago and it came from my frustration with people who don't acknowledge questions or comments that I've made.

In my job, I deal heavily with customers and communication on my part is crucial. I'm scheduling dates and times and sending along lists of tasks for my customers to complete before I arrive.

For example, if my customer has never used Apple's Device Enrollment program, I provide a link to the portal, tell them they'll need to provide a DUNS number as part of the sign up and **stress** they do this ASAP because it can take days or weeks because Apple will need to have a phone conversation with someone in charge. Without that type of forethought, a lot my time (very expensive time) is spent on less important things.

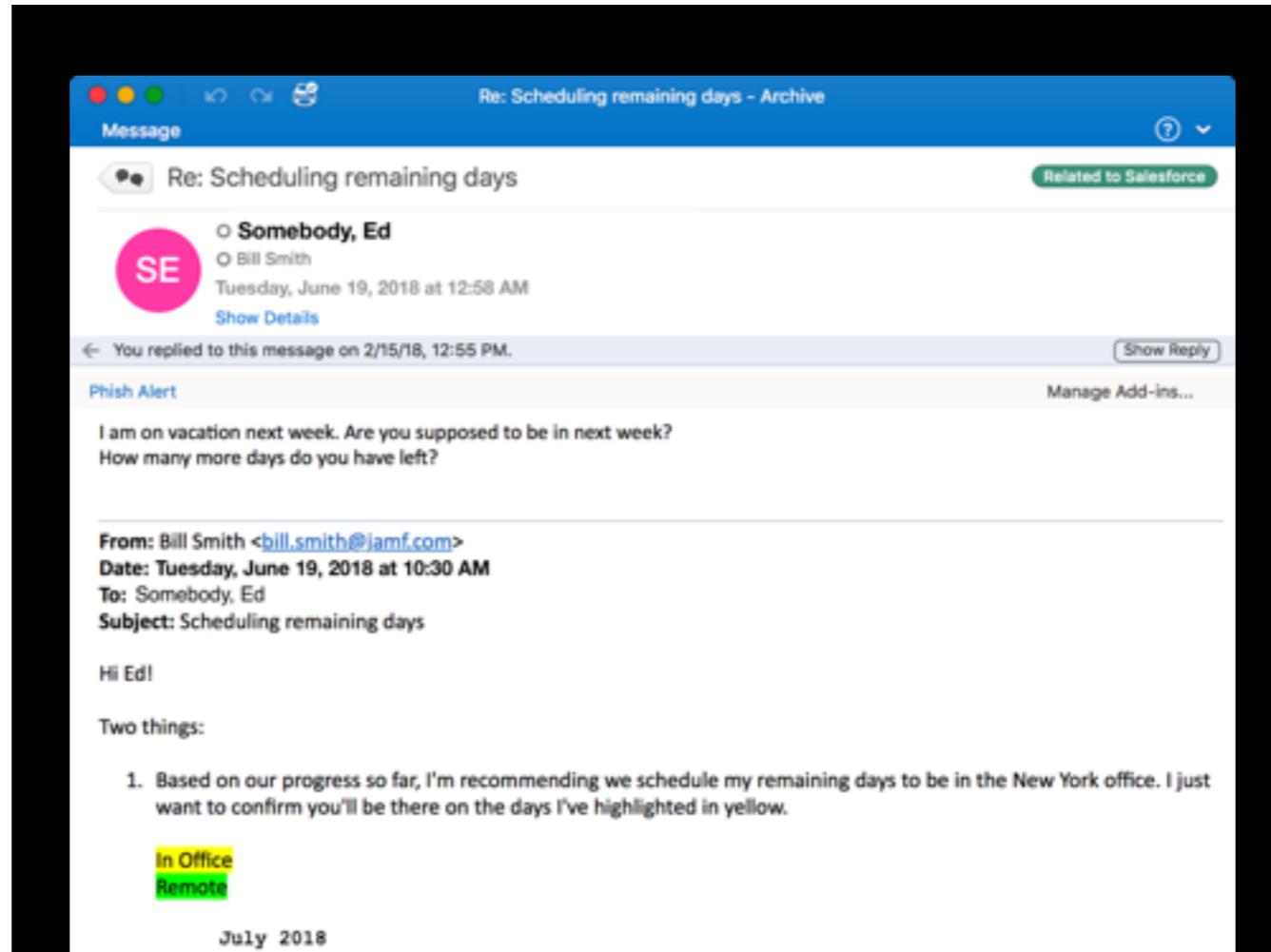


Here's an email I sent to one of my customers a while back. Names and dates have been changed to protect the guilty. This is an email to a vice president of a Fortune 500 company. He's a busy person. I took the time to make this brief, if you can believe that. I knew his time was valuable and I wanted to be as clear as possible.

At the start of my message I said, "Two things". That was to make clear I had two items for him to pay attention to.

The first numbered item said "Here's my recommendation for scheduling my remaining days." I even went to so far as to open Terminal and run the cal command to create that little calendar, so I could highlight dates and visually demonstrate my plans for my remaining upcoming visits.

The second numbered item asked for a phone call, specifying a time.



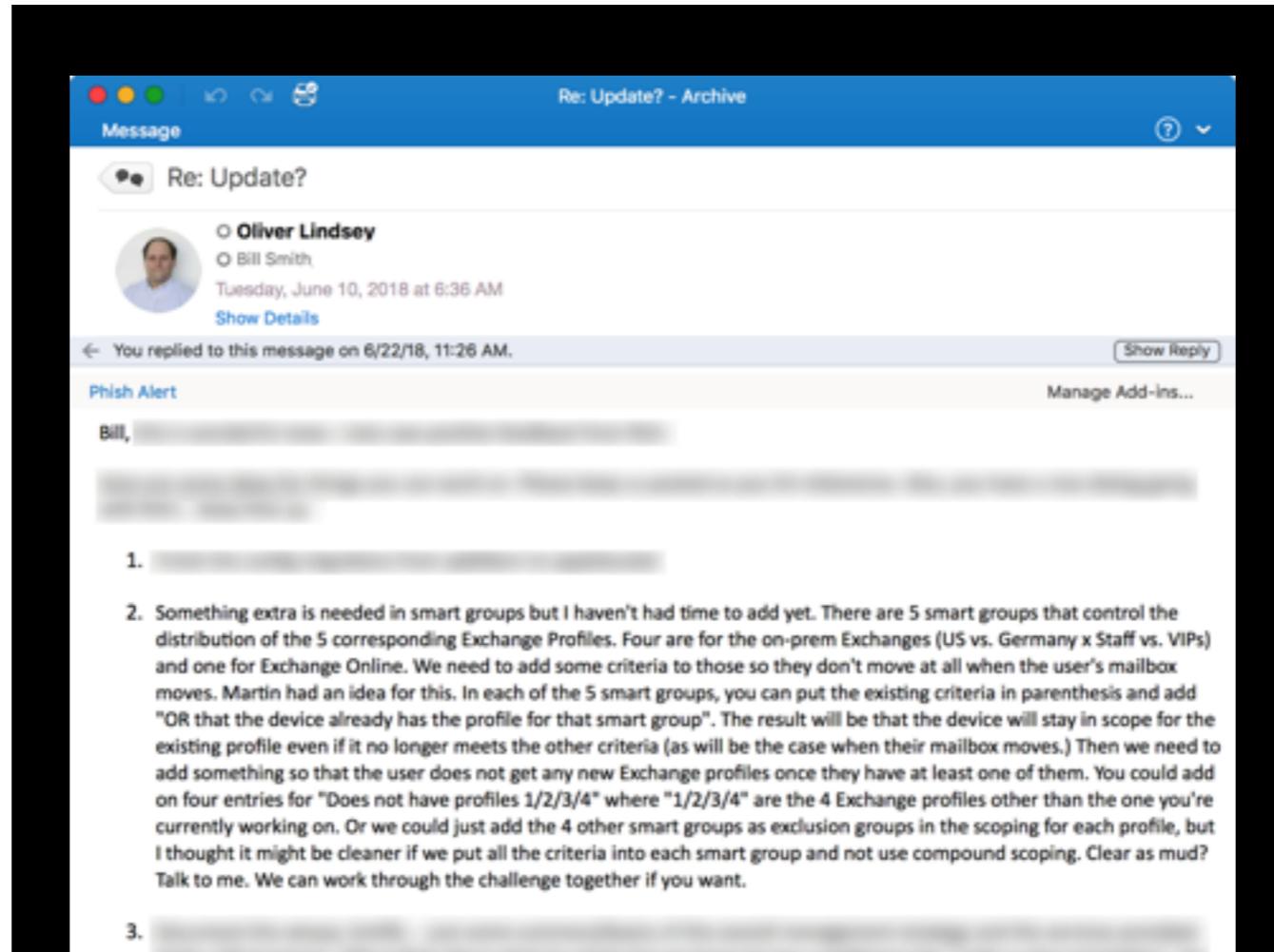
This was the response I received.

Clearly, communication didn't happen. The answers to his questions were in the email he replied to.

Has anyone here sent an email stating or asking for very specific information and received a reply that didn't seem relevant?

What do we do when something like this happens?

- We consume unnecessary cycles.
- We send more emails, which take more time to compose and causes delays
- Maybe we make a phone call, which may go to voicemail and we start to play phone tag
- Your blood pressure goes up out of frustration.



How or if others will respond to our communications is out of our control. We have to accept that and deal with it as it happens. However, how **we respond** to others is **our** responsibility. And it's better to take longer to process incoming communications and respond completely than spread it over a series of email messages having to clarify our thoughts or include some details we forgot.

Here's an email from one of my co-workers Oliver. He's brilliant with creating solutions for complex problems. And sometimes, he'll send me something like this—something very stream of consciousness.

This is:

- 1 paragraph
- 11 lines in email
- 14 sentences
- 251 words

He's asking me to do two things in Jamf Pro as part of a project and giving me instructions for how to do them. (This is for a project where I came in late and didn't have the complete history to draw on for information.) Almost everything I needed to know was right there. It was my responsibility to get the meaning.

● July 10, 2018 (page 3)

Email cleanup project

1) Archive everything older than 20 days.

2) Search for and delete automated messages.

3) Search for and delete mailing list messages. Unsubscribe!

4) Every day... Read newly received messages. Process and delete.

5) Every day... Read some of the most recent messages. Process and delete until inbox is empty.

OK, page 4...

● July 10, 2018 (page 4)

✓ 1:10 pm E Oliver

- Five smart groups and five corresponding Exchange configuration profiles.
- Four profiles are for on-prem and one is Exchange Online.

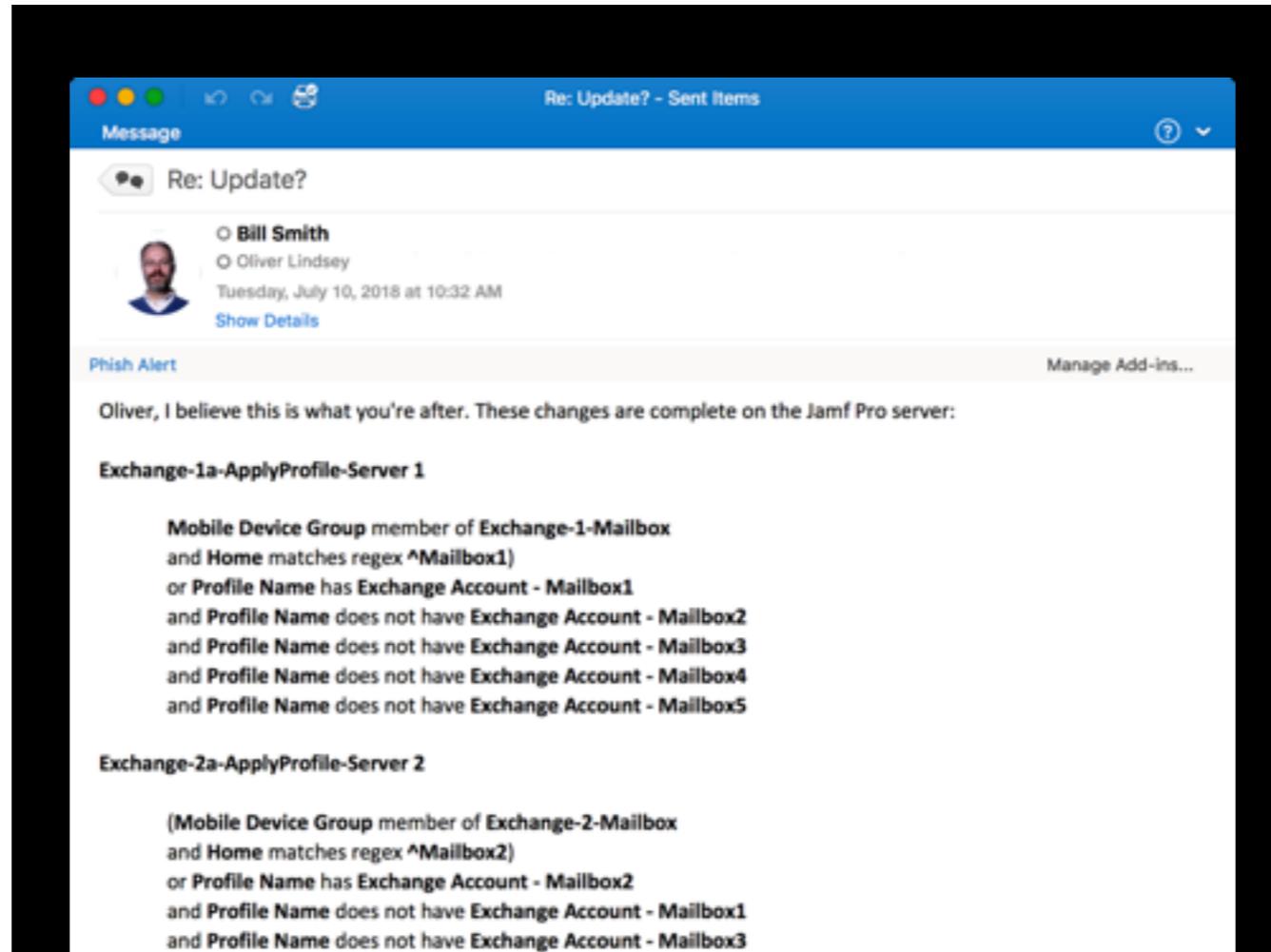
In each of the 5 smart groups:

1. Put the existing criteria in parenthesis and add "OR profile name has 'name of profile'.
2. Add "and profile name does not have profiles 1/2/3/4" where "1/2/3/4" are the 4 Exchange profiles other than the one you're currently working on.

Here's what I did:

- I copied Oliver's paragraph into BBEdit.
- As I read through it, I deleted lines that were commentary instead of instruction. In other words, I deleted anything that wasn't actionable like "Something extra is needed in smart groups but I haven't had time to add yet. " While important, it was distracting and I removed the distraction.
- I **kept the lines** I found meaningful. I'm dealing with five smart groups and five configuration profiles.
- Then I **kept the scope** of the task, which was to do some actions on five smart groups.
- Finally, I **numbered each thing** I needed to do for each smart group.

It was a little time consuming but it wasn't difficult. I **ended up modifying five Jamf Pro smart groups** and doing two things to each one. 10 tasks.



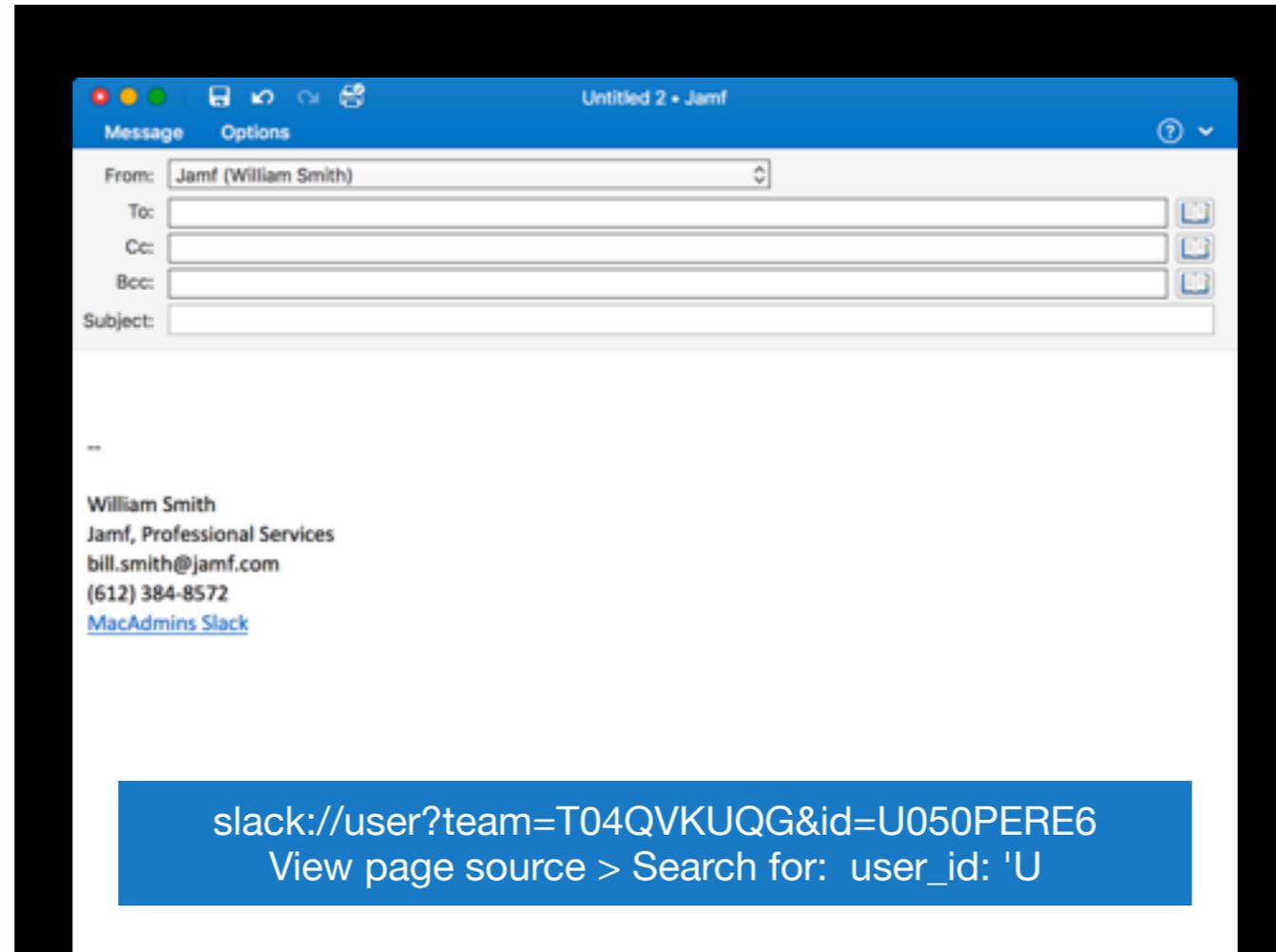
And finally, in keeping with "Communication happens when I know that you know what I know", I responded to Oliver's email to let him know exactly what I did and I included his entire paragraph of information.

Notice that I go to great pains to make my emails understandable. Just in my emails here, I've used:

- Indentation
- Numbers or bullets
- Bolding
- Different fonts
- Colored highlighting
- And I keep my conversation brief

Because this task included several pieces and Oliver didn't explicitly state the names of any of the smart groups or profiles, I gave complete details for him to review. He can:

- Not respond or respond it looks great!
- He can say, "I see a mistake" and point me to it.
- Or he can say, "This isn't what I was thinking at all. Let me clarify."



And while we're discussing email, I'd like to mention one thing you can do to save others time. Include an alternate way of communicating with you in your email signature. I recommend at least adding your full phone number. And then include your email signature in all your outgoing communications.

If for some reason you don't fully answer someone's question and someone needs to get a more immediate response from you than email, that person is going to want to call you.

I also like to include my MacAdmins Slack direct message link. The team ID in the URL is the same for everyone. The easiest way I've found to get my user ID is to log in to Slack with a web browser, view the page source and search for: **user id: 'U'**.

follow-up

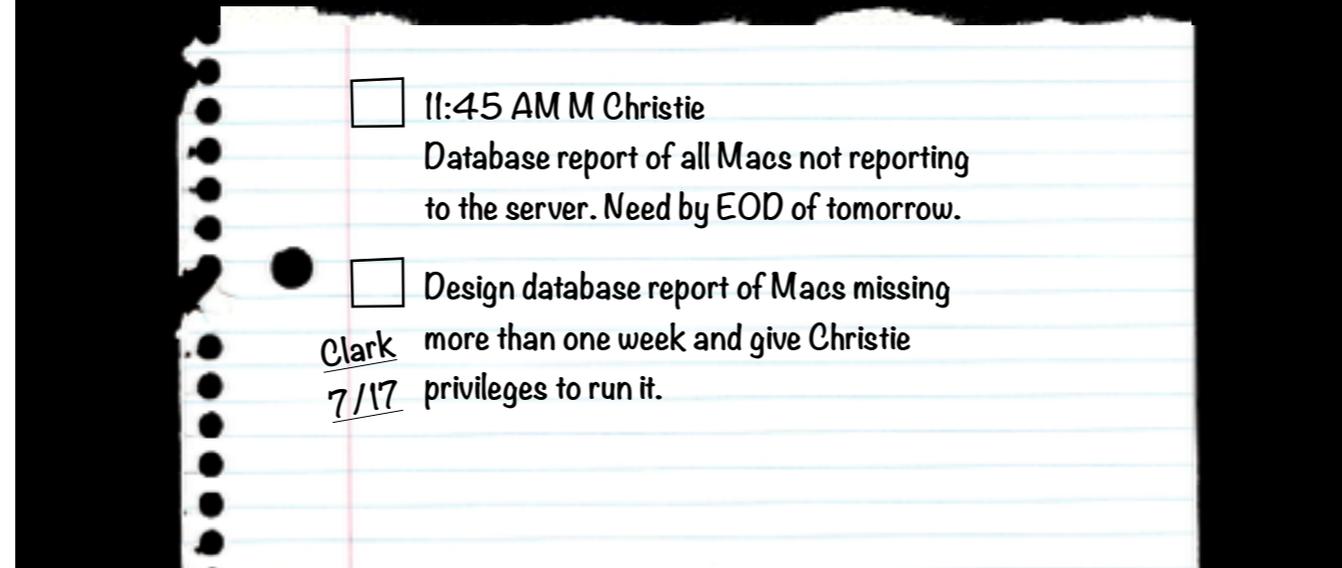
Let's move on to follow-ups. This is where you can wow people with your time management prowess.

The first thing I want you to know is this is a hyphenated word. It's a thing. It's a noun or it could be an adjective.

follow-up

/FAH lo up/ • English • noun, adj.

the act of verifying information or an event



When you need to make sure something happens you **follow up** (verb) with a **follow-up** (noun).

Let's **look back at the items** we created regarding Christie's request for a database report.

Because of the urgency, we'll handle the first one and get Christie her report.

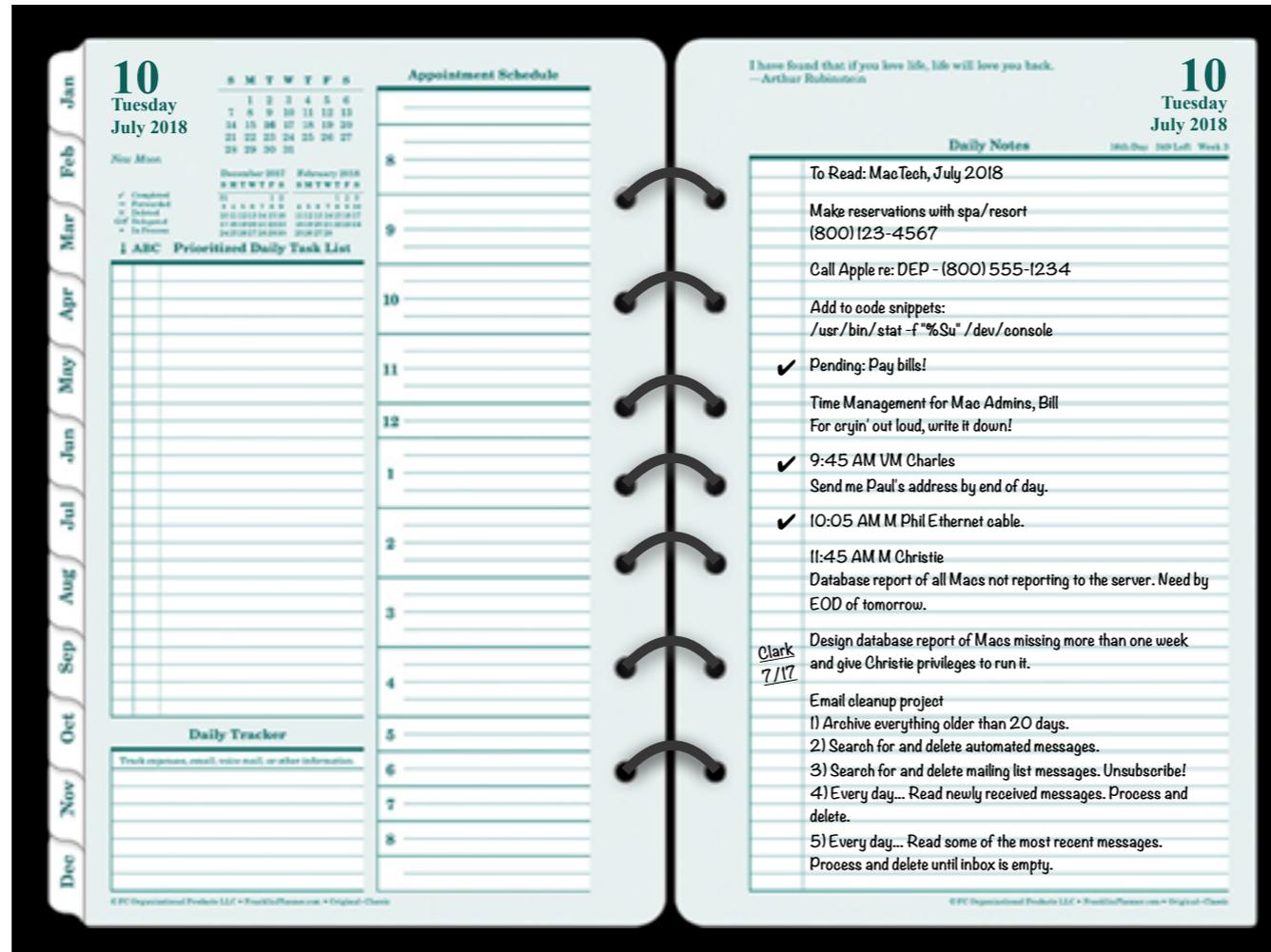
The second item, though, doesn't have an urgency to it. I'm going to **delegate this one to Clark** and I'm going to ask him to have it ready within the next week.

Ultimately, who would you say is responsible for making sure this gets done?

- Clark may be responsible for doing it, but we're responsible for making sure he gets it done and done correctly.

Can anyone tell me how I make sure this happens?

- I create a follow-up.
- Where? In my task list.



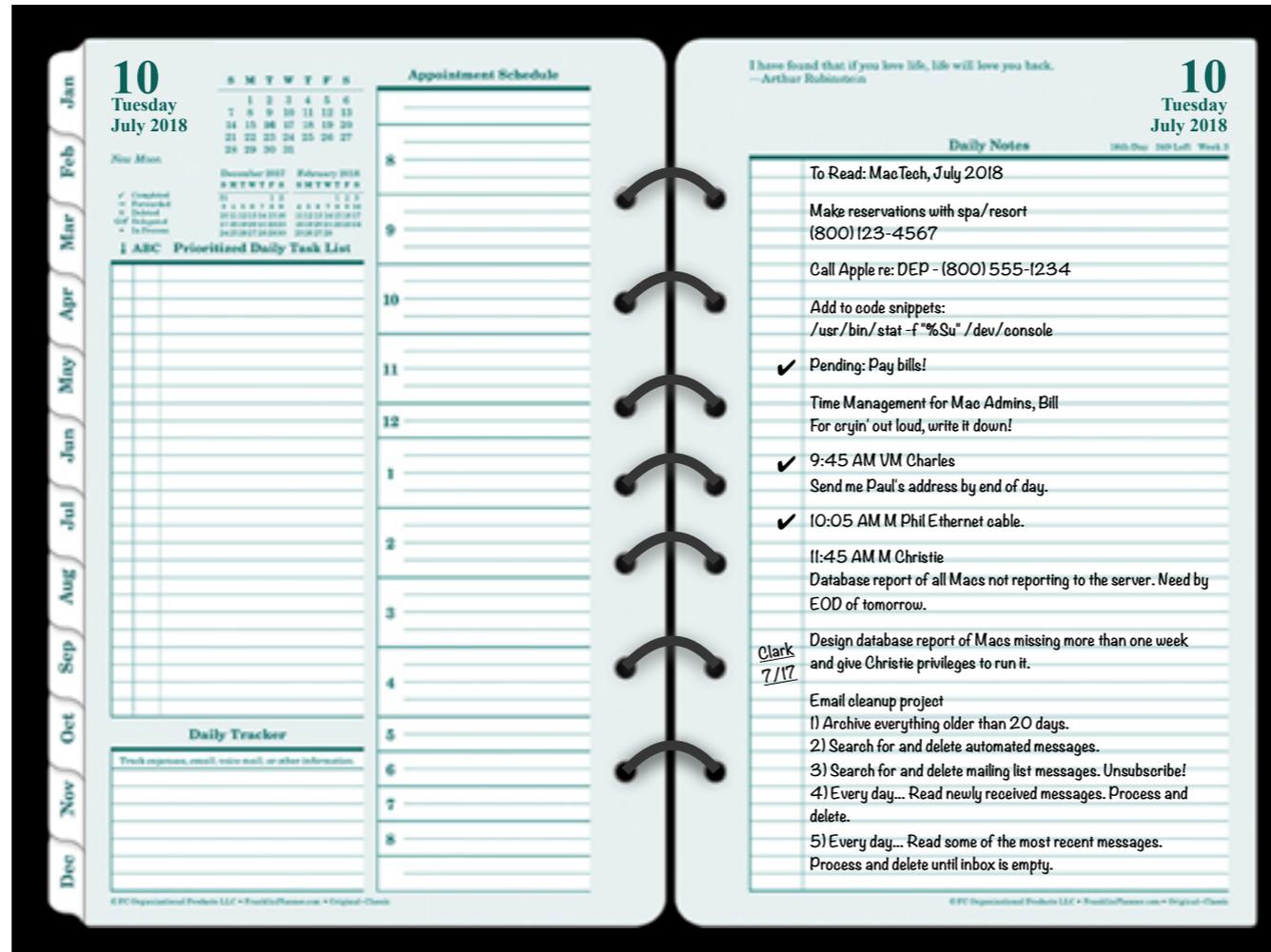
Here's where our paper planner comes into play. The planner style I'm showing you is from Franklin Covey. It's their basic 2-page style and while it may seem a little bland, it's very functional.

The pages are in a ring-binder. This lets you keep about a couple month's worth of pages in your book—this month and next—and it lets you add additional pages for notes if you run out of room.

Most 2-page planners are laid out this way. For every day of the year, you'll have a page for Daily Notes. Let's **transfer the notes** we've taken so far to the planner.

Next, **let's mark done** what we've already completed.

Finally, let's include our note where we **delegated a task to Clark**.

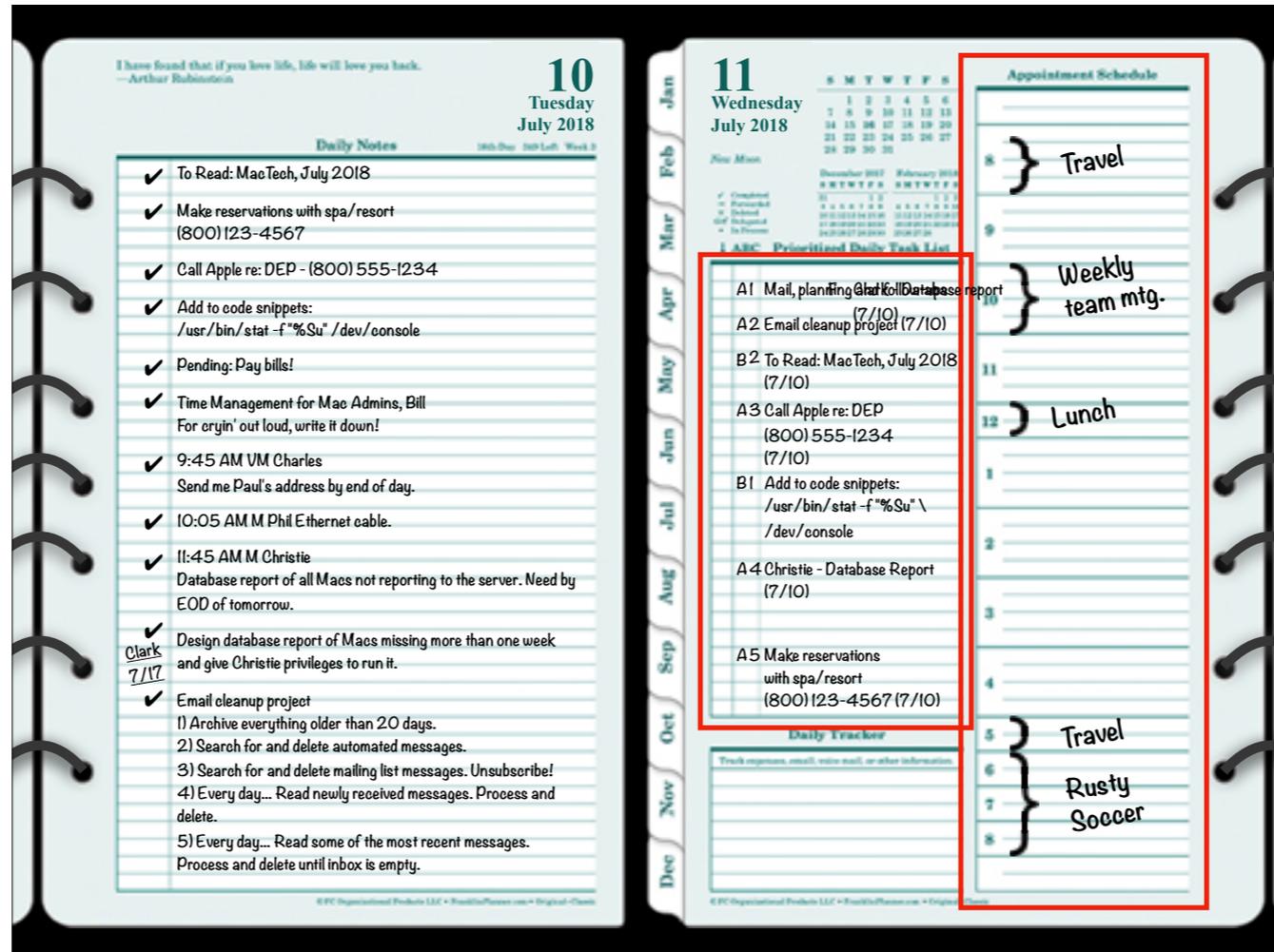


It's the end of the day. We're going home in a few minutes. Now, it's time to process our Daily Notes. This is your **mise en place** for the next day.

Can anyone tell me what we're getting ready to do?

- We're getting ready to evaluate our notes for actionable items.
- Then we're going to place those actionable items in our task lists in future days.
- We're not necessarily moving everything to tomorrow.

Let's look at today's Daily Notes and tomorrow's task list and calendar side-by-side.



Throughout the day, your schedule is going to be **determined by your calendar**. This is the first thing you should fill out for tomorrow. It gives you an overview of your committed time, which is meetings and appointments vs. the rest of your time, which is for completing tasks.

Fill in the items you've put on your calendar and if you take lunch at a certain time every day, add that too. And fill in travel times if you're scheduled to be somewhere after work.

Now, **add items** you need to do every day such as processing your email and **working to get your email** down to Inbox Zero. Notice that I'm not listing all the individual steps here—just the name. And I'm adding the date back to my Daily Notes where this was first recorded in case I need a reminder about what I'm doing or more detail.

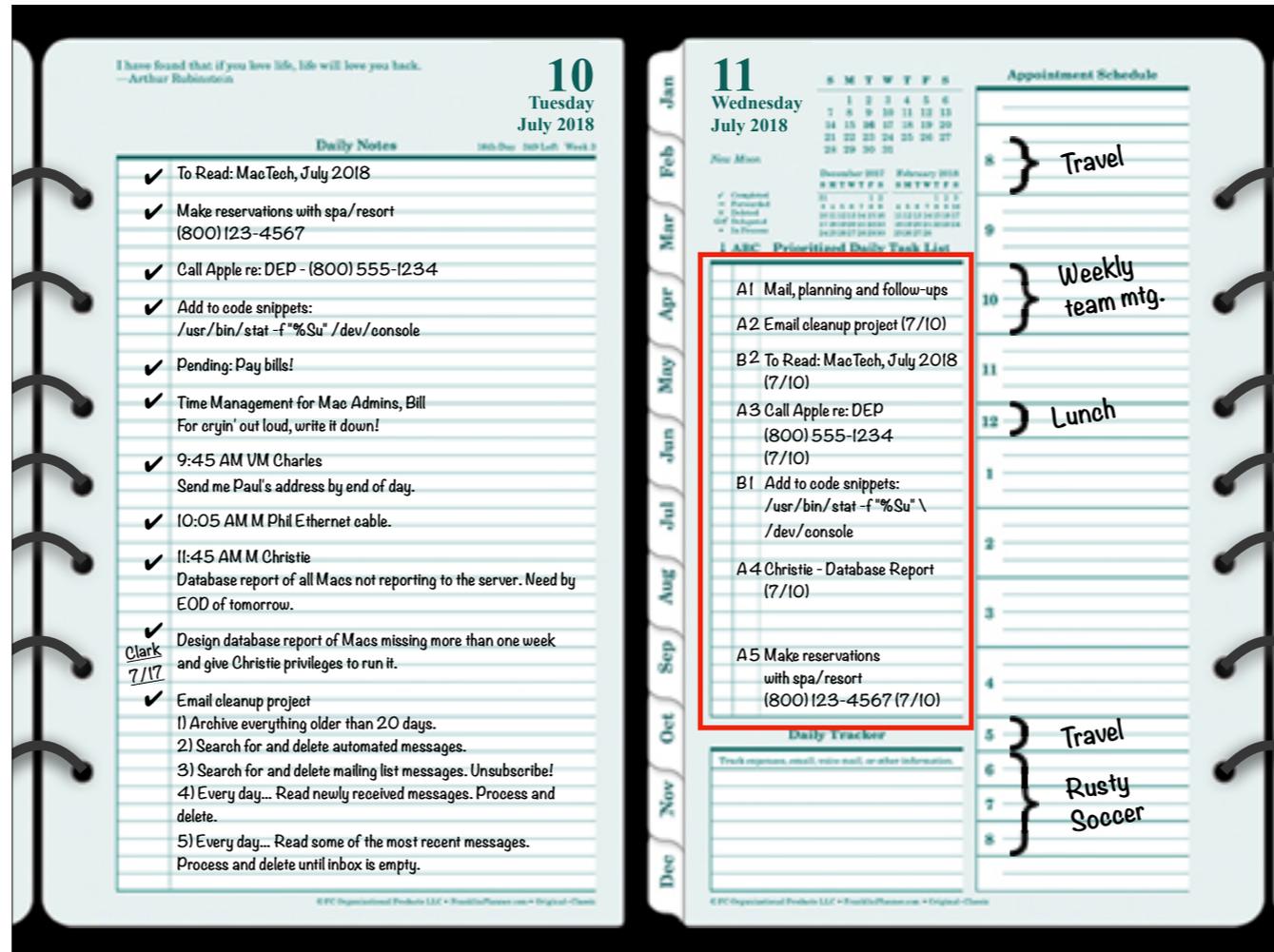
I'm also going to **add an "A"** to the left of each of these tasks. That "A" tells me its a high priority task—something I really should get done today.

And now that I've converted this note to an actionable task, I'm going to **mark it off my Daily List** to indicate it's been processed.

Let's do more. That magazine I need to read... **I'll move it over to tomorrow**—maybe browse through it during lunch. This one, though, gets a **B** instead of an A. It's not high priority. If I don't read it today, that's OK. And I **mark it off my list**.

How about that vacation reservation? That's a personal item and maybe I shouldn't be taking care of personal items at work. I'll **put it at the bottom** of my task list to indicate this is something I'll do this evening. But I want to take care of it today, **so it gets an A. Done**.

Do that for every item on your list.



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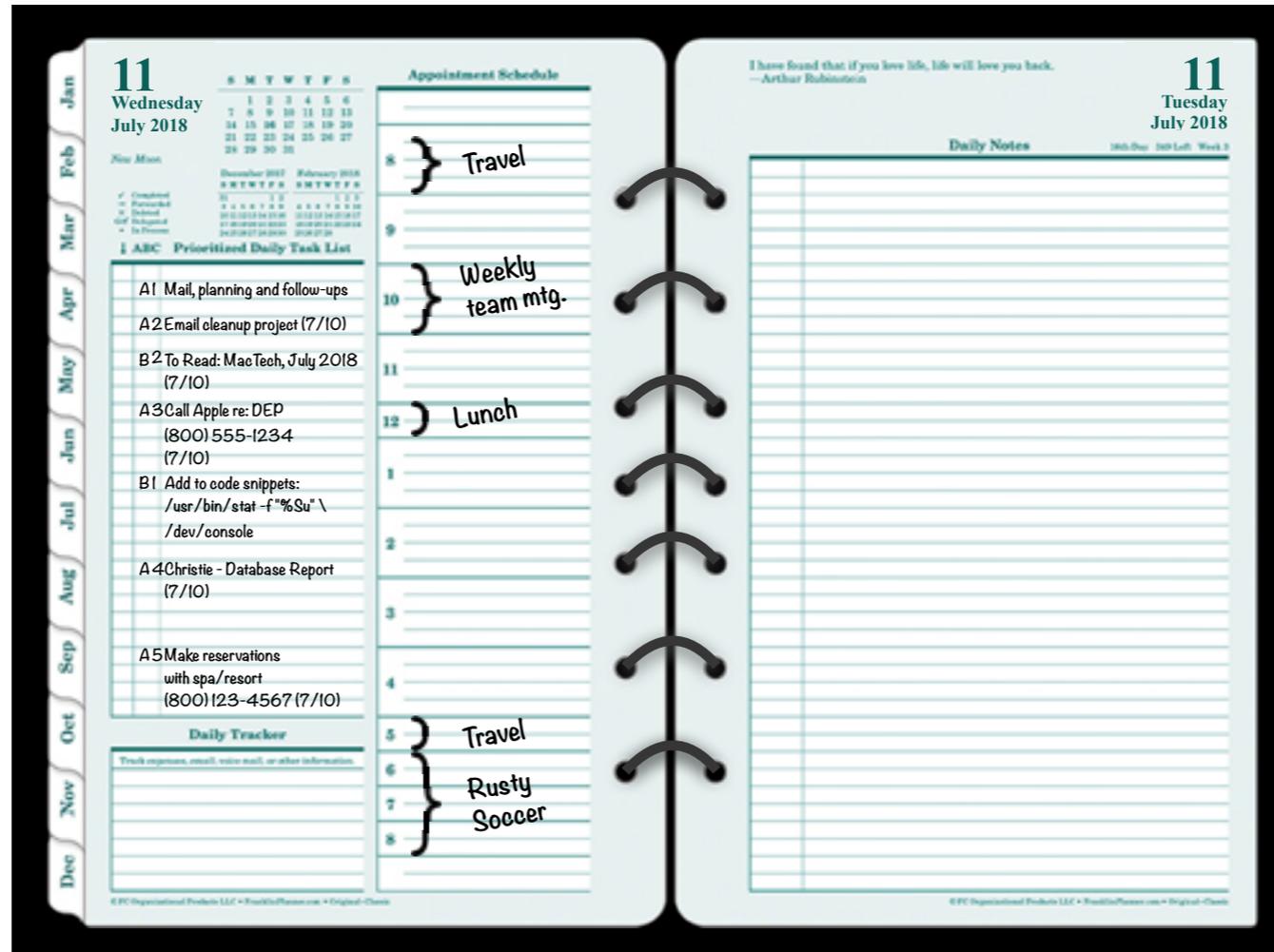
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On the left page, you have your plan for the day.

On the right, you have a blank page to take notes throughout the day—phone calls, voicemails, drop-bys, meeting notes, websites you discover, code snippets. These are things you think are important or need future action.

And at the end of tomorrow, move any incomplete tasks to the next day, fill out your calendar for tomorrow, review your notes and create tasks for anything that's actionable. Create follow ups on future dates for those things where someone needs to respond to you.

You'll repeat this **cycle** every day. And that's what the Time Management for System Administrators book calls this process—**The Cycle Method**. This is the habit you want to develop. Stick with it and your level of responsibility reaches near perfect. You don't let anyone down.

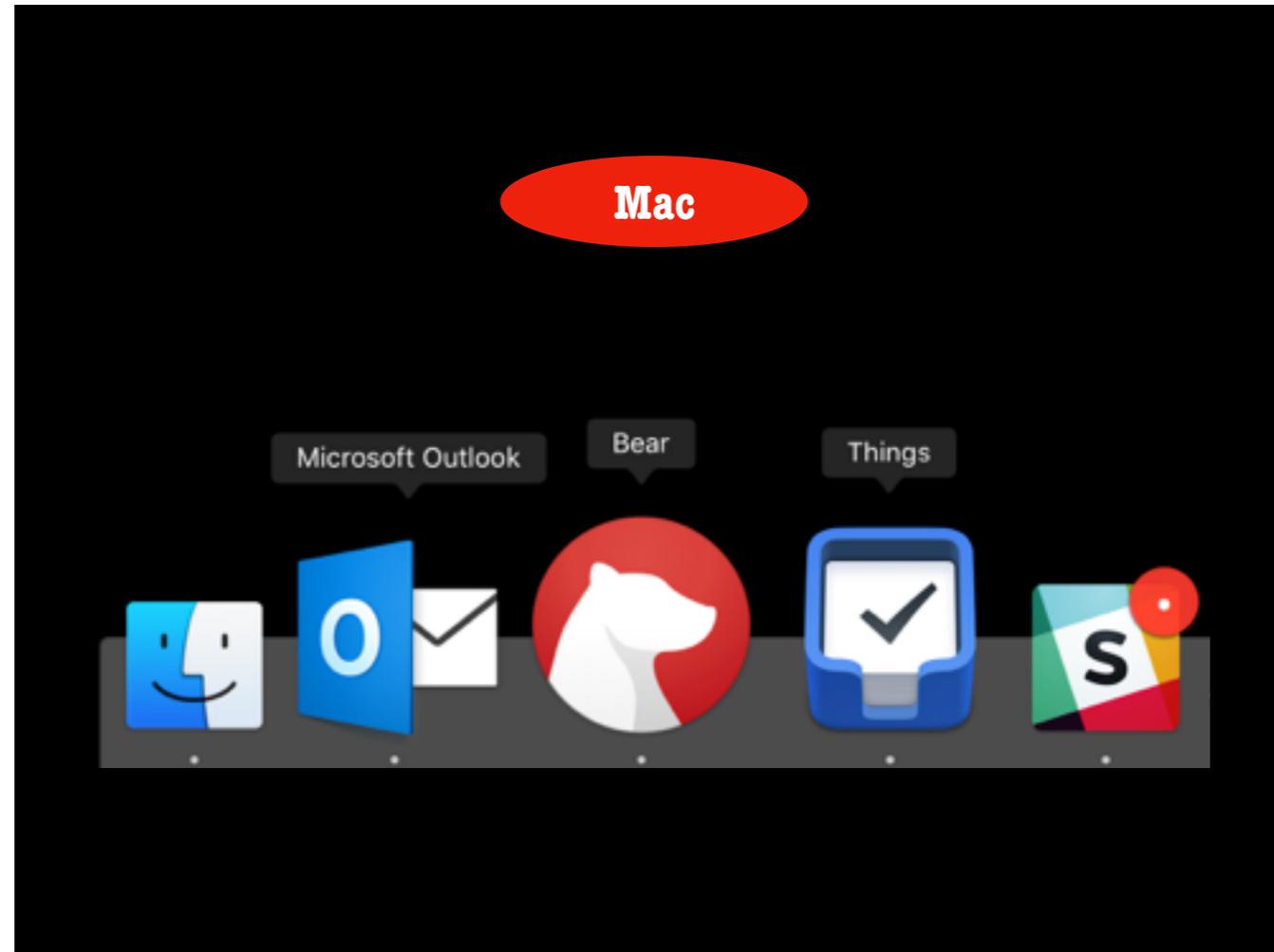


What I've shown you with a paper planner is very translatable to apps. In fact, I encourage you to use apps instead of a paper planner if you can.

Can anyone think of some reasons why?

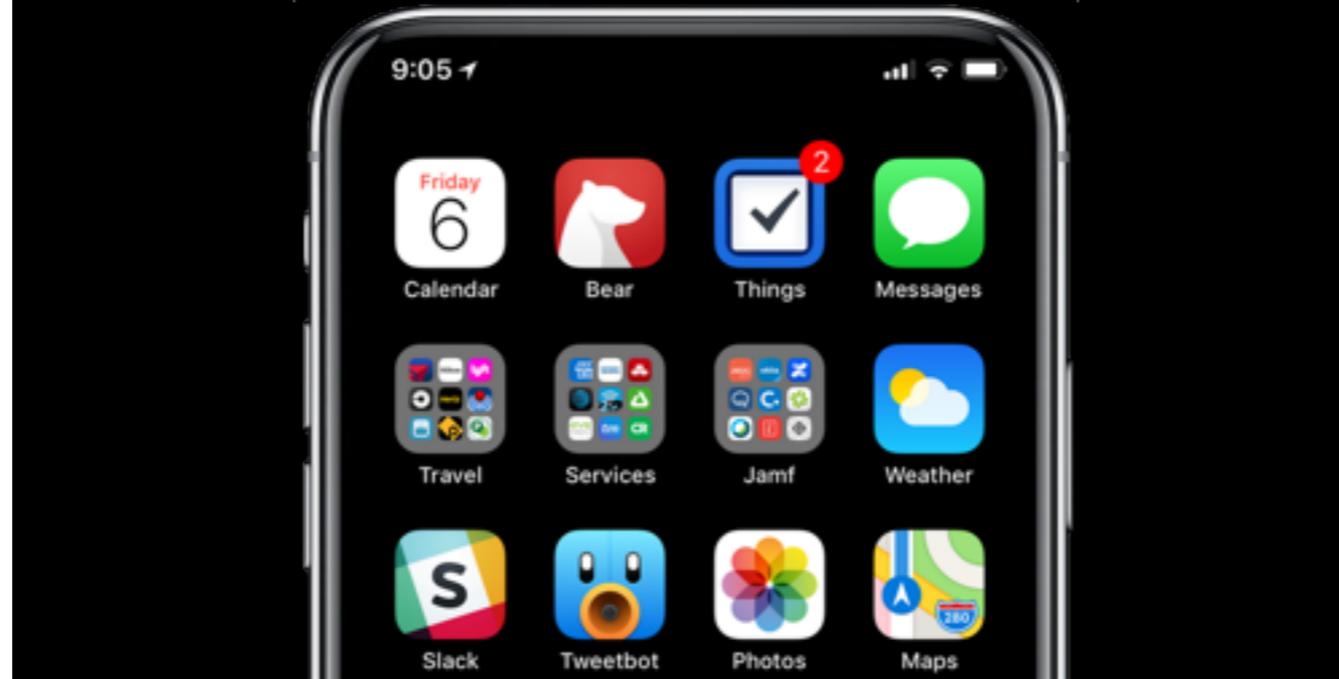
- Apps can sync across devices. You can always have your electronic planner with you.
- Syncing creates another copy somewhere else.
- Receive alerts, notifications or reminders from Mac to iPad to iPhone to Apple Watch.
- Scriptability, which we'll discuss in a bit.

The three apps I use are on the end — Bear for notes, Things for tasks and Microsoft Outlook for calendaring on my Mac.



I arrange my dock with these three apps together and this becomes my electronic planner on my Mac.

Phone



On my phone, I use Apple's Calendar app instead of Outlook for iOS, but it connects to my same Exchange accounts.

Calendar, Bear and Things are my first three apps on my home screen.



And even on my Apple Watch, I have Calendar, Bear and Things grouped around the center clock app, which isn't moveable. If it were, I'd be moving it out of the way and stringing the three apps straight across.

**Organization takes time.
Organization saves time.**

All of this planning, all of this arranging of icons takes time. But eventually, it will save you time.



How many of you have spare change jars at home?

I've always hated carrying around change in my pockets. It seems to weigh me down and I was always finding some change in the washer or dryer that I'd missed when washing clothes.

If I went through a drive-through, I'd take the change from my order and put it in the ashtray in my pickup since I'm not a smoker. And one thing I never wanted to be was that person in the checkout lane at the grocery store who had to count out exact change and make everyone behind him wait.

That just irked me to no end!



My mother had a favorite phrase she used to like to say to me:

"Watch your pennies and the dollars will take care of themselves."

So, with all this change building up everywhere, I went to Cimarron Pottery, which is this warehouse sized store full of home decor where you can buy unusual things to decorate your house. It sold statues and wood carvings and framed prints and fake flowers and antique looking chests and anything made of clay.

I bought a big glass jar the size of one of those water cooler bottles you see in offices and took it home and set it on the floor just inside my front door.

Every day for five years when I came home, I'd throw my change in there and just forget it. It solved my problem of having change everywhere.

Then one day my partner and I decided to make a go of our relationship and change it from long-distance to move-in. I was moving 900 miles and the last thing I wanted to do was haul that hundred pound jar of loose change with me.

So, I hauled that thing to my bank and asked them to turn it into cash.



It was about \$1100.00, which completely covered my moving expenses for a one-way U-Haul and trailer to tow my truck.

I had developed this habit to solve a simple problem. And it turned out to solve an even bigger problem without me knowing.

After I moved, I kept throwing my spare change in that jar and after about seven years living in an apartment, we decided to buy a house. Sure enough, we had enough change to pay for all the packing supplies and movers to move us across town.

habit

Many of you probably came to this conference to help break the routine of your job. But **routine** is good. You want things to be routine.

One of the ways you make things routine is by developing habits.

If you achieve automaticity (making something happen without thinking about it), you've formed a habit.

habit

/HAB ət/ • English, French • noun
a regular tendency or behavior



In its original meaning, the word **habit** meant clothing.

Whom do we know that wears habits?

- **A nun**

Then **habit** came to be synonymous with a profession or **purpose**. And finally, it evolved from what one does to to how one behaves.

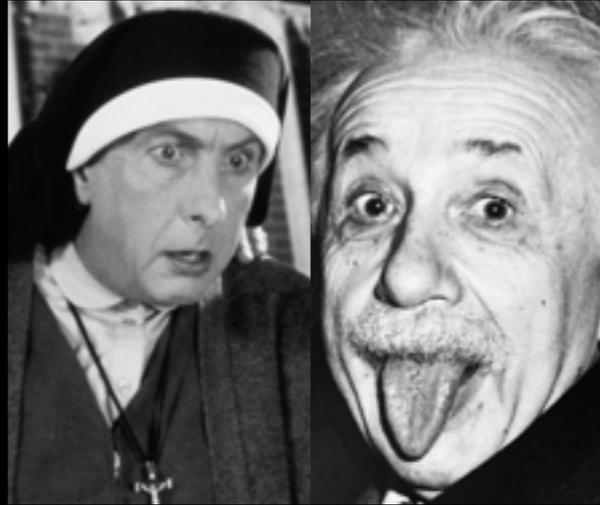
You might recall hearing how **Albert Einstein** wore the same clothes every day just to keep his mind clear for important things. **Now, did that really happen?** No. While that story may have been exaggerated little, it goes to show that there is some **genius** in simplicity and continuity.

Geniuses! **All of them.**

Am I saying that you'll be become a genius by simply wearing the same clothes everyday? Who knows? But where you develop habit and routine and achieve automaticity, you'll find you can accomplish some amazing things.

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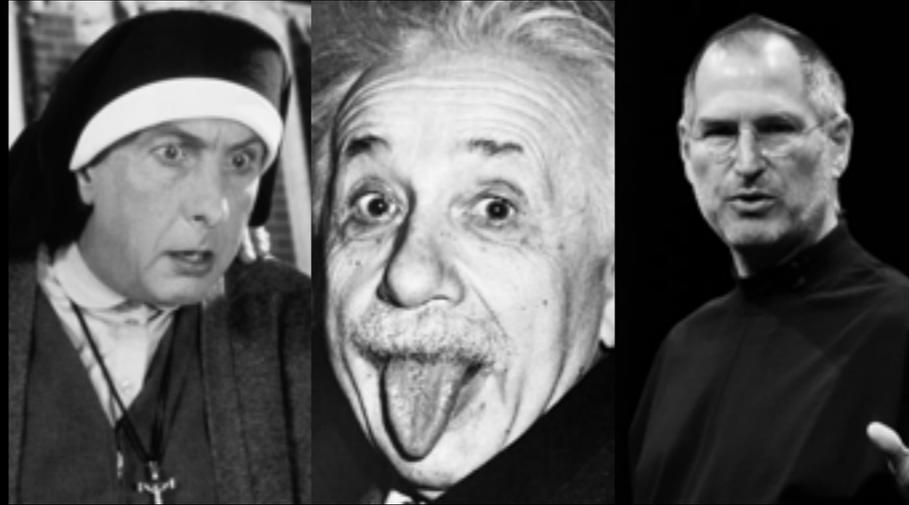
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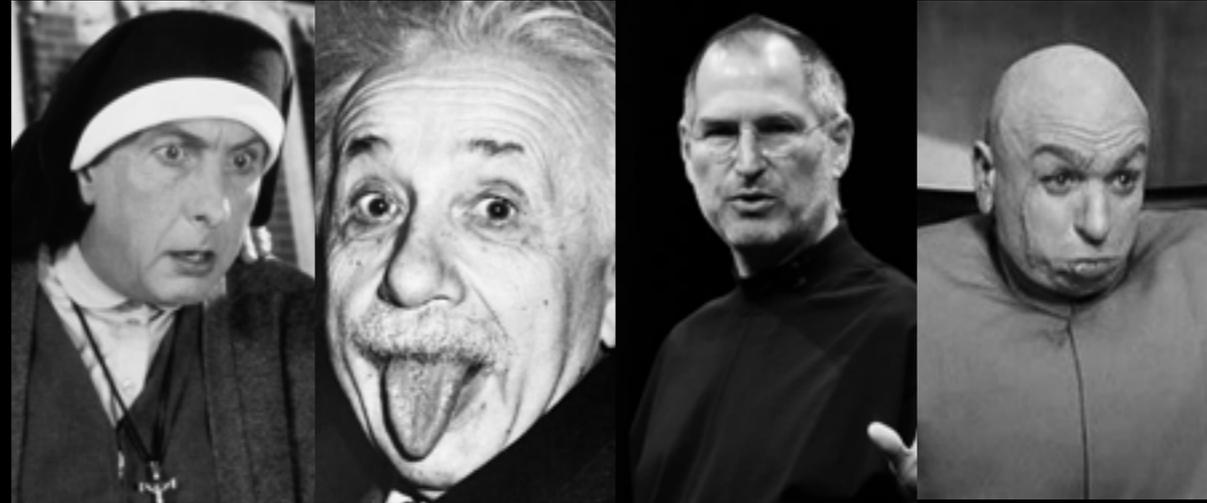
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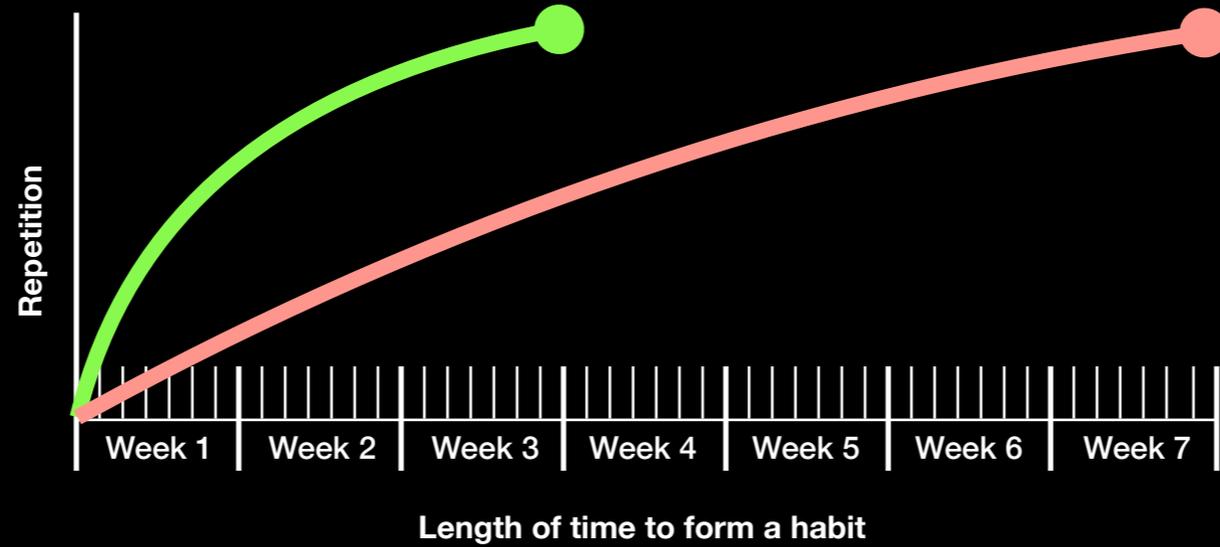
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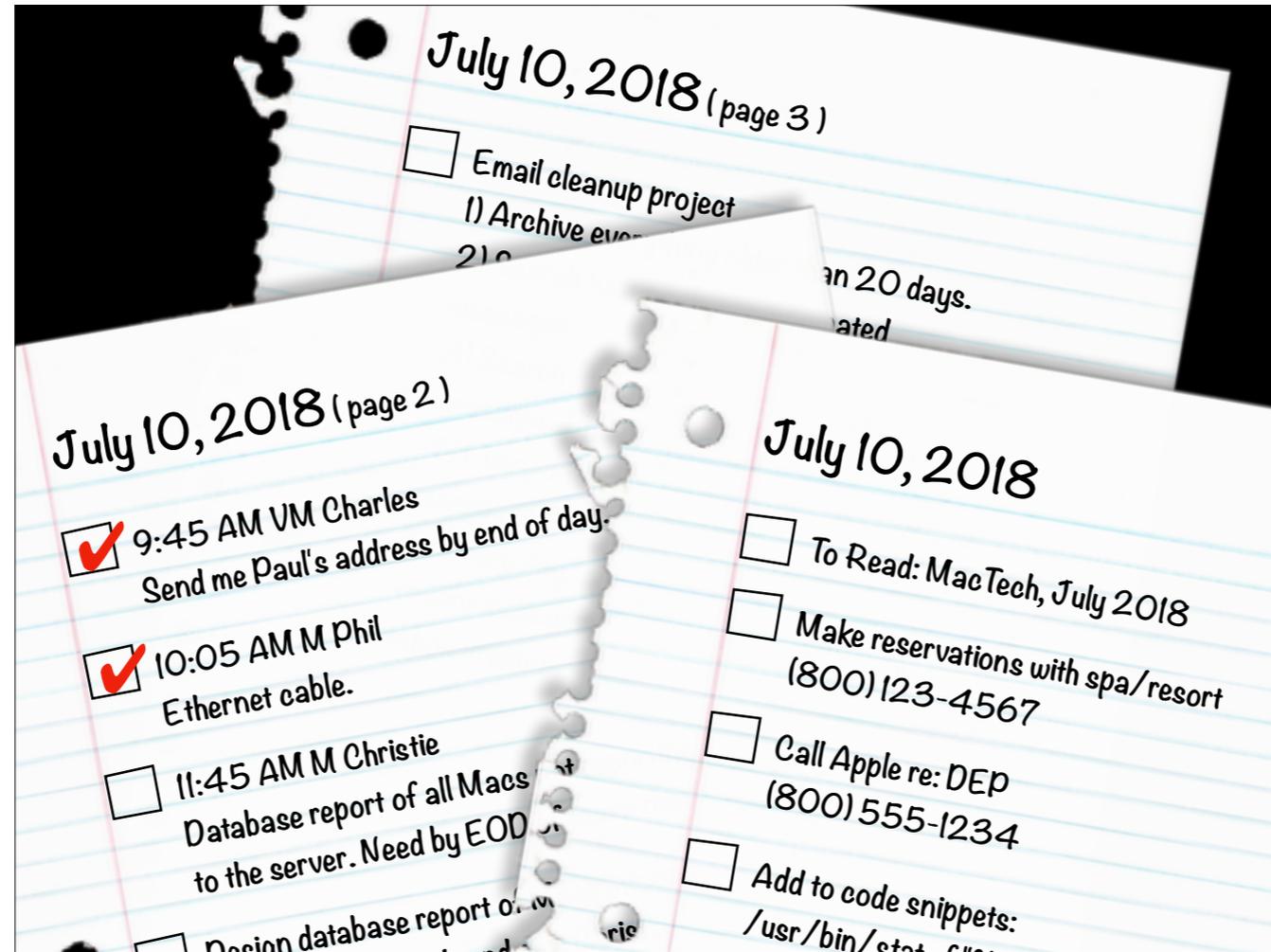
automaticity

/ah tuh muh TIS i tee/ • Greek • noun
the notion of acting without thinking



I'm going to bring back this slide because it's the key to developing a habit.

Remember, the more you do something early in the formation of a habit and the more consistent you are, the quicker you'll reach automaticity and develop that habit.



All the time, notes to to get things out of your head.



Turn those notes into actionable items and add your tasks and follow-ups to your next day or future days.

Then plan your tomorrow:

Every day, build in your calendar first so you keep your commitments to others.

Prioritize your tasks and work through them.

Take notes throughout the day.

Rinse. Repeat. Continue the cycle.



If you're able, convert your planner to apps that have equivalents across your devices so that you can always keep a copy with you for reference as well as updating as you go through your day.

Don't forget: Using the apps isn't the habit you're trying to form. They're just tools.

Routine note-taking and planning are your goals.

Practice makes habit.

Finally, practice makes habit. I have fallen off the time management wagon many times because routine can be boring. But I've found the stress I cause myself by letting things get cluttered and the embarrassment of missing commitments is plenty of motivation to get right back on.

You'll probably do the same.

On your desk, in your inbox and anywhere else you have a lot of distraction, reduce clutter.

Plan your days and always set goals.

Follow through by following up with people who are suppose to answer a question or take care of a task for you.

Keep your calendar and be on time.

Repeat the Cycle by maintaining your calendar, tasks and notes.

And say your mantras that help you stay guided.



**... for the
Mac admin**

There is one more thing...

Part of managing your time is improving efficiency. Everything we've discussed up until now could apply to any administrator or even to anyone who has a job and needs to make more time.

What makes time management unique to Mac admins is that we know how to automate things. And we have several tools for doing this.



Of these apps that I mentioned earlier, these support automation using their online APIs.

WunderList and OneNote only support automation using their REST APIs, which means to automate anything, you must be connected to the Internet.

While they both sync your data across devices, if you plan to automate I would avoid these two apps.



These apps support AppleScript, which is Apple's native scripting language for automating applications. Of these applications, you have at least three across every category of Notes, Tasks and Calendars.

If you're not familiar with AppleScript or want to learn a new scripting language, automating these apps for time management would be a great place to start. I highly recommend it as scripting language you should know.

AppleScript:

```
tell application "Things3"  
  get name of every to do of list "Today"  
end tell
```

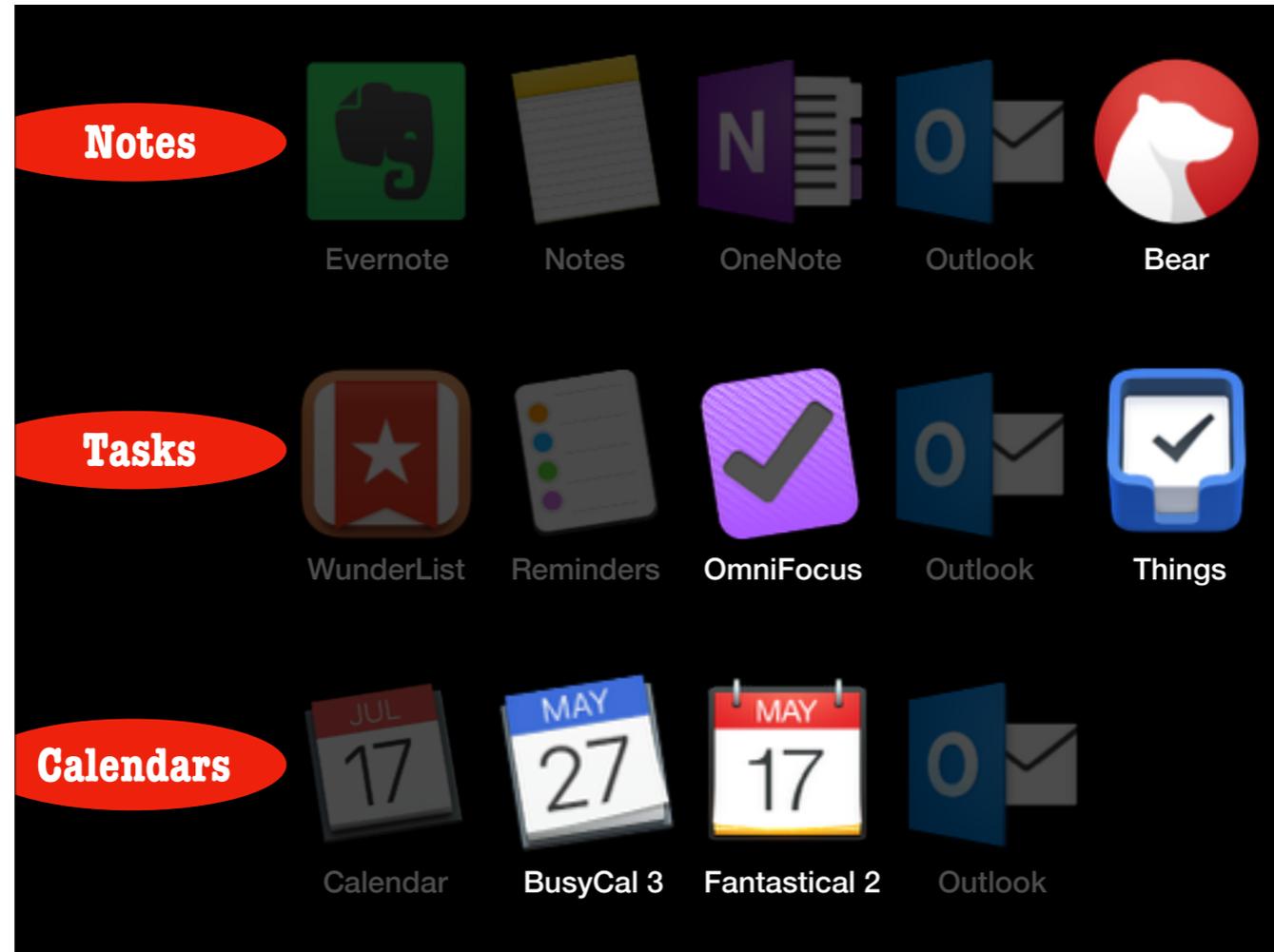
Bash:

```
/usr/bin/osascript "tell application  
  \"Things3\" to get name of every to do  
  of list \"Today\" "
```

These apps support AppleScript, which is Apple's native scripting language for automating applications. Of these applications, you have at least three across every category of Notes, Tasks and Calendars.

If you're not familiar with AppleScript or want to learn a new scripting language, automating these apps for time management would be a great place to start. I highly recommend it as scripting language you should at least be familiar with.

Note that you can also call an AppleScript command in bash using `osascript`.



Finally, these apps support scripting using URL schemes.

If you're not familiar with URL schemes, **they look just like URLs** except instead of specifying HTTP or HTTPS as your handler, you'll use the application's URL handler followed by a command and then parameters separated using ampersands (&) following the command.

URL scheme:

```
things:///add?title=Test&checklist-  
items=Milk&when=Today&list=Household
```

Bash:

```
/usr/bin/open 'things:///add?  
title=Test&checklist-  
items=Milk&when=Today&list=Household '
```

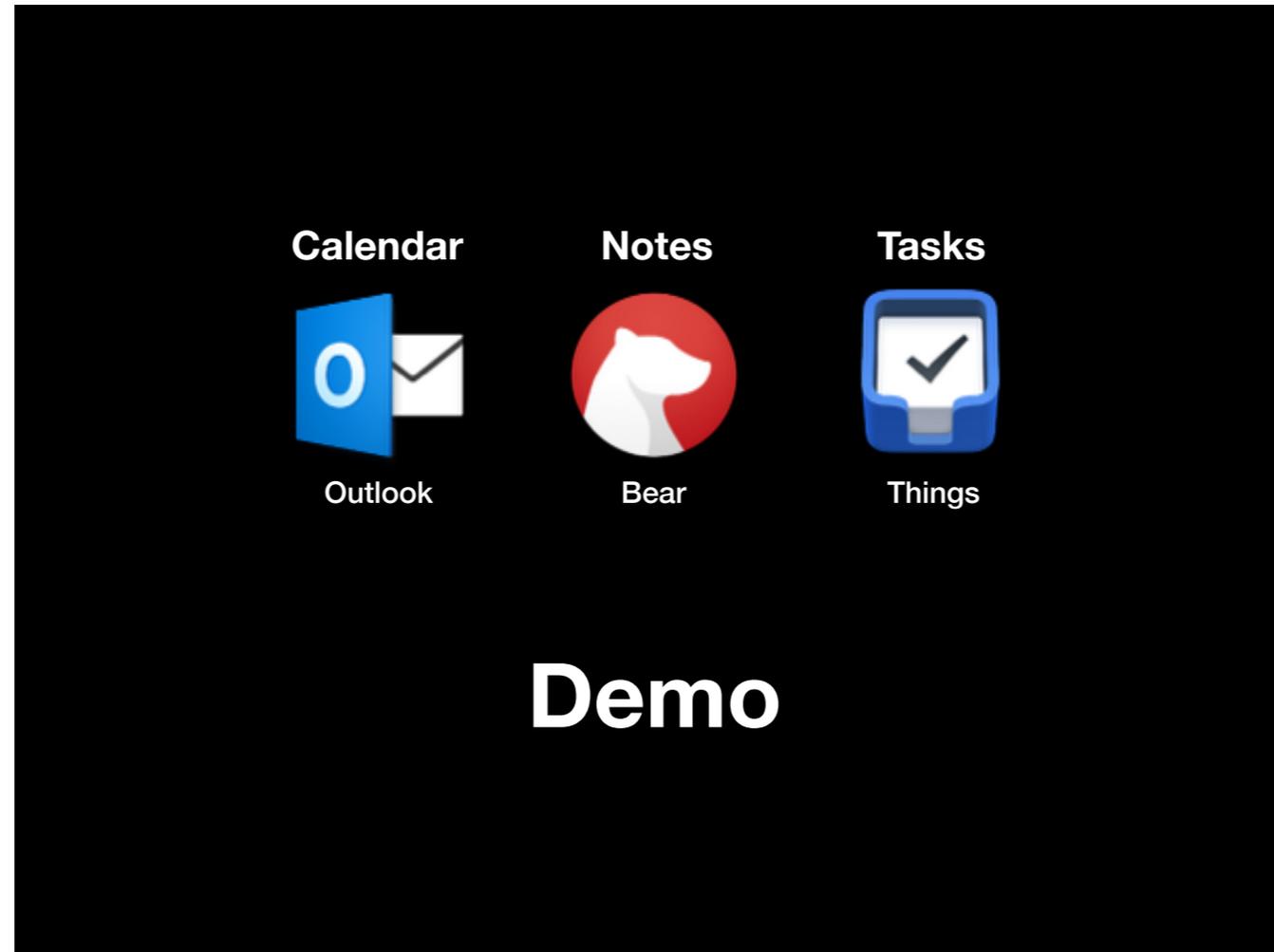
AppleScript:

```
open location "things:///add?  
title=Test&checklist-  
items=Milk&when=Today&list=Household"
```

Finally, these apps support scripting using URL schemes.

If you're not familiar with URL schemes, **they look just like URLs** except instead of specifying HTTP or HTTPS as your handler, you'll use the application's URL handler followed by a command and then parameters separated using ampersands (&) following the command.

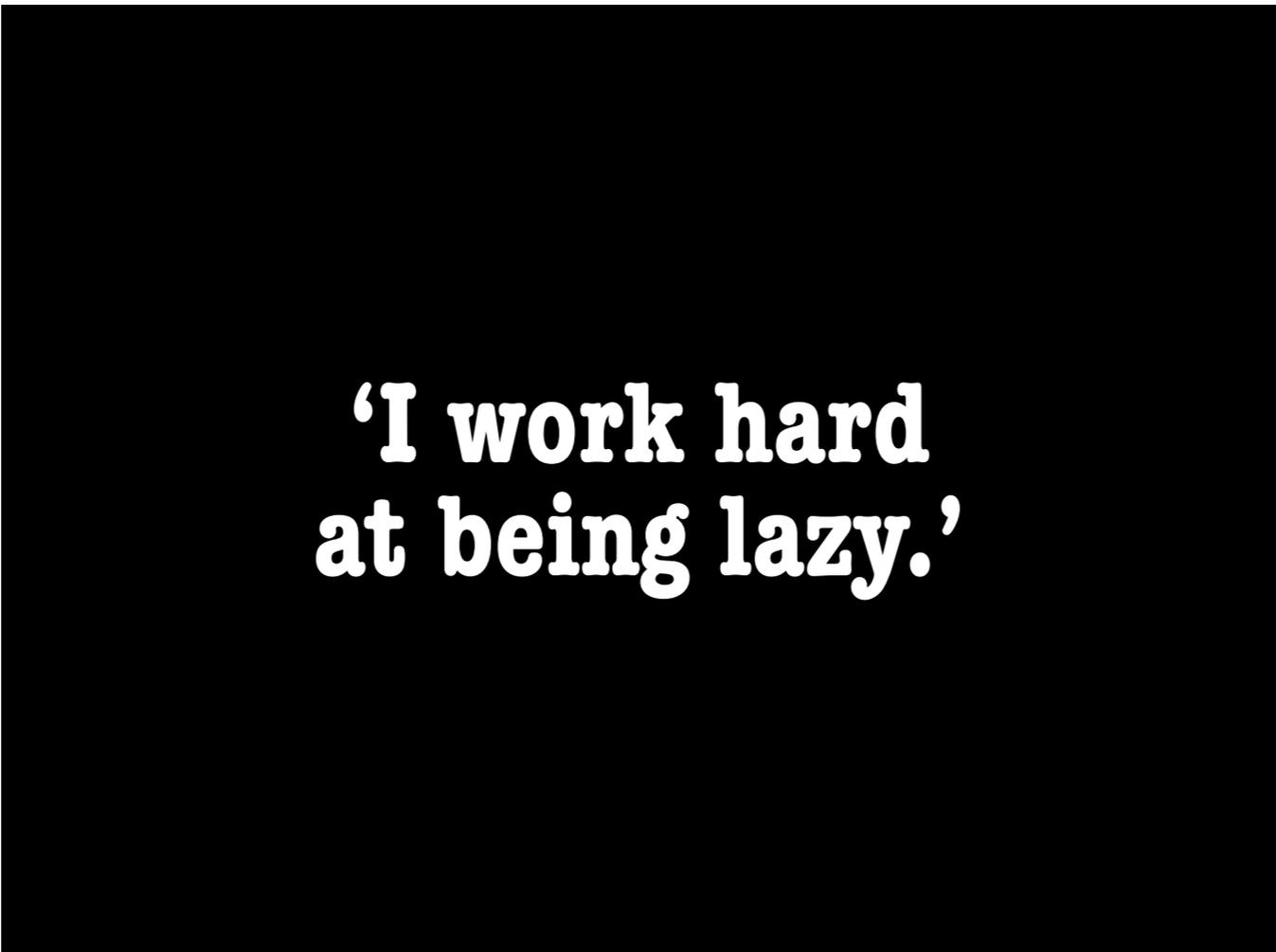
Again, note that you can also call a URL scheme in a bash script using a simple open command as well as from AppleScript using an "open location" command.



Let's see how some of this works.

My three apps of choice are Outlook for my calendar, Bear for my notes and Things for my tasks.

- Demonstrate adding AppleScript menu to menu bar.
- Demonstrate adding new Daily Note in Bear.
- Demonstrate linking Outlook message to Daily Note in Bear.
- Demonstrate linking Outlook message to Things.
- Demonstrate adding completed tasks in Things to Daily Note in Bear.



**‘I work hard
at being lazy.’**

Scripting not only saves time but it removes the mundane out of your routine and guarantees repeatability and consistency.

My buddy Brad loves to script and loves to automate things.

I think it's only fitting that I share his thoughts on the subject of why he scripts.

‘I work hard at being lazy.’

And so should you.



William Smith

Twitter: @meck

Slack: @talkingmoose

Submit Feedback:

<https://bit.ly/psumac2018-252>

JEOPARDY!

**NOT MY FAULT
THE FIRST TIME,
BUT NOW YOU'VE TRICKED
ME TWICE.**

What is...

Fool me once, shame on you?

JEOPARDY!

**HOW TO GENTLY DRIFT
AS YOU STING
LIKE A BEE.**

What is...

Float like a butterfly?

JEOPARDY!

**HOW YOU SHOULD
BEHAVE WHEN
THERE IS NO TRY.**

What is...

Do or do not?

JEOPARDY!

**WHY
ANGER LEADS TO HATE
AND HATE LEADS TO
SUFFERING.**

What is...

Fear leads to anger?

JEOPARDY!

**LIKEWISE,
WHEN YOU WANT
OTHERS TO DO
UNTO YOU.**

What is...

Do unto others?

JEOPARDY!

**YOU SHOULD
SAY SOMETHING
WHEN THIS HAPPENS.**

What is...

When you see something?

JEOPARDY!

**DO THIS
BEFORE CUTTING ONCE.**

What is...

Measure twice?

JEOPARDY!

**PREFERRED OVER
NEVER.**

What is...
Better late?

JEOPARDY!

**THE OPPOSITE OF
QUITTERS NEVER WIN.**

What is...

Winners never quit?

JEOPARDY!

EARNs A PENNY.

What is...

A penny saved?

JEOPARDY!

**SOMETHING
THAT SAVES NINE.**

What is...

A stitch?

JEOPARDY!

**DO THIS
BEFORE YOU LEAP.**

What is...
Look?