

Keeping the brain on track

We rely on our brain's memory to keep our lives in order. It's our go-to file as to what's important, what requires immediate attention and then what's next on the to-do-list.

The less complicated our lives, the easier it is for our memory to track, file and retrieve what we need, when we need it. Unfortunately, for most of us **our memory in-box is overflowing**.

Memory not being sure what's important sends up all kinds of distraction messages into our conscious awareness. **"Oops! I forgot about that, let me take care of that right now"** and you know the rest. – everything else just has to wait until you eventually get to it.

Some people keep their memory in-box from overflowing by keeping a list. If you're a list maker and it works for you stop reading now. However, if you're a list maker and you recognize these signs keep reading.

Are you guilty of ...

- having multiple lists
- losing your list(s)
- making list(s) but never looking at them again
- having a list so long that it's intimidating
- completing only 10% of what's on your list
- having a list of items almost illegible because it's so old
- treating your list the same way as your New Year's resolutions.

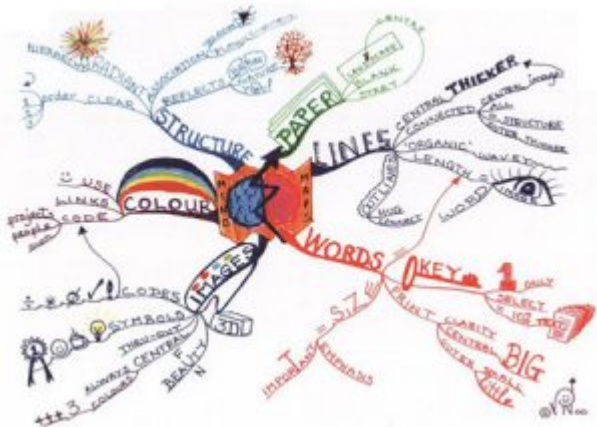
One effective alternative to a list is creating a mind map. **A mind map is a visual diagram of information**. It has a number of uses and is great for organizing information or generating new ideas and relationships. It's also great for replacing

your list with a more powerful image.

The design of a mind map **allows the brain to process information in a more meaningful way** by making it more organic and free-flowing rather than the traditional left to right, top to bottom format.

It also has a key feature of overall simplicity by using a single word or phrase as its central theme. Different information related to the central theme branches off and is often color coded to set it apart.

I've provided a organic example below from the blog post *What is Mind Mapping? (and How t Get Started Immediately)* where you can find out more.

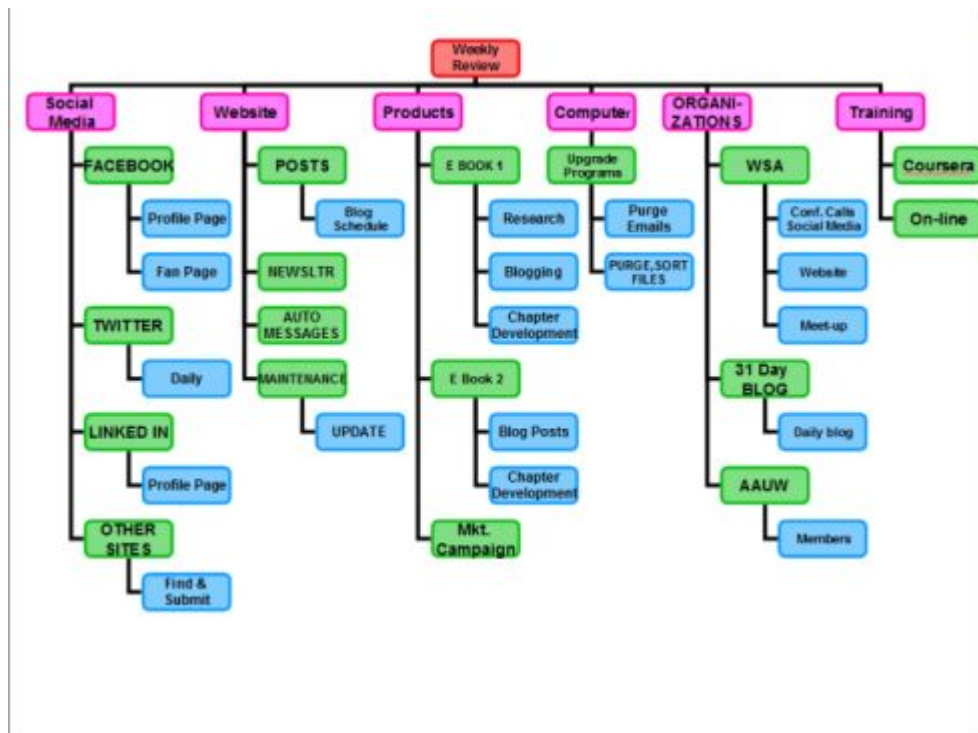


For those of use who have brains that aren't so comfortable being free-flowing and organic, a little structure works for us.

Below is a personal example of a PowerPoint category layout I created for myself. I made this to keep my brain from being overwhelmed by my different activities.

After creating the layout in PowerPoint, I took a screen shot and saved it. I then opened it in IrfanView and cut out the image, resized it and saved it in my picture file, But, I knew if I printed it out I would lose it just like my lists. Now, it resides directly in the center of my desktop. **Every morning when I turn on my computer, there it is starring me in the face.** My brain knows exactly what it has to do to stay on

track for the week.



While you don't need to mind map everything, **do mind map the most important things that need to get done in your life.** Just think of how much easier it is for your brain to keep you on track by freeing up all that memory space!.

Are you list writer or a mind mapper and how's that working for you?

Sources: <http://litemind.com/what-is-mind-mapping/>