

Like this article?  
Follow us  
@Leaderonomics  
on Facebook,  
Twitter, LinkedIn  
and Instagram.



Head over to <http://bit.ly/2eZNX0c> to read Travis' last two steps towards working with an organised mind.

By **TRAVIS BRADBERRY**  
editor@leaderonomics.com

**T**he average person has 70,000 thoughts each day and, if you don't learn to organise them, they have the potential to wreak havoc on your productivity.

When you succumb to the flurry of thoughts running through your head, your mind becomes disorganised and, the more you ruminate on intrusive thoughts, the more power you give them.

Most of our thoughts are just that—thoughts, not facts. When you find yourself believing the negative, distracting, and pessimistic things your inner voice says, it's very hard to slow down the momentum of your thoughts.

In a recent study conducted at the National Institute on Ageing, it was found that allowing your mind to be disorganised doesn't just feel bad, it's also actually bad for you. A disorganised mind leads to high stress, chronic negativity, and impulsivity. These states stifle productivity and contribute to a slew of health problems, including weight gain, heart disease, sleep problems, and migraine headaches.

Edward Hallowell, a therapist who helps people deal with disorganised minds, describes what happens when someone falls victim to a myriad of invasive thoughts: "They make impulsive judgments, angrily rushing to bring closure. He is robbed of his flexibility, his sense of humour, and his ability to deal with the unknown. He forgets the big picture and the goals and values for which he stands. He loses his creativity and his ability to change plans."

An organised mind, on the other hand, falls into a state of flow. Flow is a bliss-

# HOW TO GET YOURSELF INTO A STATE OF FLOW

## STEPS TO ORGANISE AND DECLUTTER YOUR MIND



ful state of balance, where you are fully immersed in a task, completely free from distracting thoughts. Flow states enable you to enjoy your work and perform at the peak of your potential. Research shows people working in a state of flow are five times more productive than they'd otherwise be.

Here are steps that I use to organise and declutter my mind, find flow, and keep myself on track for a productive day.

### Step 1: Find the right amount of challenge in what you do

When you're trying to get work done, it's easy to lose focus and succumb to intrusive thoughts when the task at hand is too challenging or too easy. We thrive on a healthy challenge — something that simulates us without being so difficult that it produces anxiety or so simple that it induces boredom. When you consciously and carefully choose a task, you greatly increase your chance of achieving flow.

### Step 2: Take Control of Your Emotions

While it's impossible to control how things make you feel, you have complete control over how you react to your emotions. First, you need to be honest with yourself about what you are feeling and why you are feeling it. From there, it's much easier to channel the emotion into producing the behaviour that you want.

The key is to identify and label your emotions as you experience them. Associating words with what you are feeling makes the emotion tangible and less mysterious.

This helps you to relax, figure out

what's behind your emotion, and move forward. If you try to stifle your emotions and tackle your work without addressing them, they will slowly eat away at you and impair your focus.

### Step 3: Sustain your focus

We all know that frustrating feeling of sitting down to tackle something important, only to quickly lose focus when we expected to dive right into the task.

It takes time for your mind to become fully-immersed in an activity. Studies have shown that it takes five to 20 minutes before people start to focus.

If you can force yourself to persist in the activity in spite of any distractions for 20 minutes, the chances are much higher that you will be able to sustain your focus and find a state of flow.

The best way to do this is to put away or turn off all of your typical distractions (phones, e-mail, social media), then keep an eye on the clock until you've done nothing but your task for a good 20 minutes, even if you aren't getting much done.

Chances are that things will really start cooking for you once you hit the 20-minute mark.

# WHAT YOU ARE EXPECTED TO KNOW BUT HAVE NO TIME TO LEARN.

Equip yourselves with these **important soft skills.**

LEADERSHIP

TIME MANAGEMENT

STRESS MANAGEMENT



DIGITAL LEARNING

100% HRDF claimable