

GTD-Q: Which quadrant should you be in?

The Four Modes of GTD-Q:

Perspective ↑	<p>Visionary (Crazy Maker)</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ideas and inspiration - Goal-setting - Creativity - Focus <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Things falling through the cracks - Feeling overwhelmed/stressed when trying to deliver - Inadequate consideration of constraints - Contributing to others feeling overwhelmed <p>What GTD Can Do for You</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Systematic approach to capture and consider commitments - Better traction to take action on ideas - Efficient processing of requests from others - Timely delegation of tasks 	<p>Captain and Commander (Autocrat)</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appropriate focus and control - Can maneuver with agility and flexibility <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complacency <p>What GTD Can Do for You</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater attention to subtle opportunities - Stretch beyond current capabilities
	<p>Responder (Victim)</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tactical responsiveness - May be necessary for short-term stability <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Driven by latest and loudest - Crisis mentality breeds crises <p>What GTD Can Do for You</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Get control of incoming "stuff" - Get perspective on where to focus - Relieve pressure 	<p>Implementer (Micro Manager)</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Order and structure - Focused on completing tasks - Highly systematic approach <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of perspective - Inflexibility - Misguided perfectionism <p>What GTD Can Do for You</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Systematic approach that is also inherently flexible - Focus on purpose and outcomes - In control through constantly shifting priorities

Control →

The following assessment descriptions are generalizations, based upon David Allen's experience working with many people over the years in both their work and home environments. The purpose of these compiled overviews is to assist you in identifying certain aspects of your current situation and to provide suggestions specific to those circumstances that you can use to improve your situation.

In other words, if you are a Visionary, with a non-stop creative mind, bouncing off the wall with a stream of project ideas and inspirations, your improvement will probably not be to have more brainstorming sessions. You need good in-basket capturing with some rigorous next-action thinking and tracking. And if you've got great action lists but you're spending most of your time filling them up with stuff you never have time to actually do, you don't need more lists. You need a good off-site to decide where you want to be three years from now.

There is no "right" place on this matrix to be. The upper-right-hand quadrant (Captain and Commander) would seem the optimal stance; and in its most pristine form it would be. But if you are not losing control and perspective regularly, you are probably stale. By its very nature, being highly productive means that you are consistently moving forward, and that means making things up and then making them happen by bringing up the rear guard. Just walking somewhere is a process of throwing yourself out of balance, based on a vision of where you're going, and preventing yourself from falling down, so you get there!

In other words, it's not about always being totally in control and having the right perspective - it's just about recognizing where you are and having good tools and techniques to get you back into a positively productive state, whenever necessary.

There are both positive and negative aspects of each style (the negative label is in parentheses). We are all Responders to events in life and work from time to time, but some maintain that as a position (Victim). We are all Visionaries as we hold images in our mind of what we might want, but sometimes we don't marry that enough with physical realities (Crazy Maker). We all work as Implementers, engineering viable structures to make things easier. But some sacrifice substance for form (Micro Manager). And we all get on top of our game as Captain and Commander, from time to time, but then may not leverage that situation to build sustainability (Autocrat). Again, it's not about right or wrong - it's about personal effectiveness. Is your approach working?

If so, no need to spend effort changing it. If not, please consider our suggestions.

This assessment is primarily situational, i. e. it is based on variables that could easily and quickly change for you in time and context.

In reality we are all likely bouncing between all four quadrants many times during a single day. You may come into your office early, organized and focused and feeling like you're on top of your game, and one unexpected call (full of unexpected opportunities or challenges) can blow that up totally. You get off the phone, your head swimming, with scribbled notes, and you need a good quarter hour to do a brain dump, process your thoughts, and reassess how to spend the rest of the morning. So, though you started as Captain and Commander, your Visionary took over on the call, you became a total Responder at the close, and your Implementer had to handle the chaos, before you could come up for air and be a Captain and Commander again.

Similarly you may find yourself in very different places on the matrix depending on what kind of activity you're engaged in. You might be a Visionary in the kitchen (with stuff splattered everywhere), an Implementer in the garden (spending \$3000 and 300 hours researching and building raised beds for which you miss the planting season), a Captain and Commander as a soccer coach (just enough practice and drills with the right amount of heart and motivation), and a Responder about your car ("Help!! What does this blinking orange light mean?").

You may, however, find yourself more regularly in one quadrant than the rest. If so, there may be some particular habits or formats that would be useful to install, to ensure greater productivity overall. It will be useful, too, to have some familiarity with the four basic styles and situations, to assist in directing yourself as well as understanding others.

For instance, we've found that Visionaries often allow themselves to be Crazy Makers, with an initial resistance to GTD, because they see the only alternative to be their opposite - the Micro Managers. "Getting organized" is perceived as the path to constraint (which it would be, with too much structure). Conversely, the Implementers become Micro Managers because of their fear of the out-of-control-ness of the Crazy Makers. Understanding that there is a position - Captain and Commander - that incorporates the best of both, resolves that dilemma.

It has also proven of great value for people to recognize the Victim syndrome - in themselves as well as in others - and how to frame a non-judgmental assessment about what's going on with a blueprint for getting out of it.

You can come back to the course to take the GTD-Q assessment as often as you like. You may find it interesting to take again after you have setup your first GTD system, or done a Weekly Review.