

4 STEPS TO ORGANIZING BIG PROJECTS FOR PRODUCTIVITY

There are 4 main steps I use to accomplish my big goals and projects. The Sunday Basket® helps you to get smaller to-do's accomplished, but there are times when we need to learn different organizing skills so we can achieve our big goals and projects. I use a consistent system when working on my big projects, and I will teach it to you in Podcast Episodes 229, 230, 231, and 232. I will use 3 different examples—planning a large party, planning summer activities for kids, and moving to a new home.



STEP 1:

Identify your project and dedicate a Sunday Basket® or Friday Workbox to the project

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Once you have committed to your project or goal, dedicate a separate Sunday Basket®, portable Sunday Basket®, or Workbox to your project. Having a separate box physically represents your resolve to reaching the goal, and helps your brain to focus on completing the project. The separate box is a temporary focal point: at the end of the project you will reuse the box for something else.



Then, empty your brain into the box. Write down every thought, idea, or plan you have about your project. Make sure you capture every thought your brain has, even if you end up with duplicates. Getting everything out of your head will resolve the feeling of overwhelm that you initially face. Drop physical items (invitations, photos, receipts, etc.) directly into the box.



STEP 2:

Chunk tasks and create slash pockets

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Separate tasks into different topics, piles, and groups. Use slash pockets to hold different parts of the project together. For big projects like this, I do not worry about color coding, I just use what I have available. In order to help, I'm including a few typical slash pocket ideas for the different projects. I am giving you 5 slash pocket ideas, but use as many as makes sense for your project.



Party Planning	Summer Planning	Moving
Invite/Guest List	Ideas	Old House
House Prep	Kid #1	New House
Food	Kid #2	Contracts
Party Items/Decoration	All Kids Together (shared camps)	Moving Checklists
Memory/Photo Project	Family Activities	Mortgage Paperwork

For more assistance, ALL ACCESS members can consult the Household Operations Binder for summer and party planning and the *10 Steps to an Organized Move* (Dashboard) for moving.

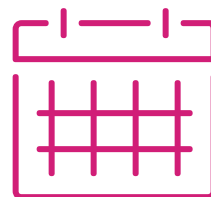


STEP 3:

Plan: Be on target, on time, and on budget

The biggest gift you can give your brain is time. The more time you have, the better you will capture all of your ideas, refine them, and prioritize. Allow yourself to work on this project in several chunks over several weeks.

Use your slash pockets to help you decide what to do. Time block and add to do items to your calendar. As you decide on your plan, work on the most important or time sensitive items first. Keep asking the question:



► What is one thing you could do that would make everything else easier or unnecessary?

As you develop your plan, set your goal, and adjust as necessary. Consider your:

- Budget
- Time Available
- Scope (maybe you will paint, but not build a deck)
- Outside expertise or help available
- Energy

Having your plan laid out and working on your project over time is typically much more effective than trying to get these big projects done in one major chunk of work time. Building your slash pockets and planning over days and weeks gives your brain time to evaluate your choices and helps you be better, stronger, and more efficient.



STEP 4:

Work your plan and get it DONE!

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I put my slash pockets in the order they need to happen. For example, invitations need to go out before I can order food, so I put the pockets in that order. I also recommend putting "must do" items before "nice to do" items.

Look at your calendar carefully, and schedule time to get these tasks done. As you make your schedule, you may find out that you do not have enough time to do it all. That is normal - deferring or deleting portions of your project helps you to get to the goal without burning up all of your resources (time, money, energy).



I always start by planning for what I need from other people - quotes for work I need done, outside help, information about what the kids want for summer, etc. I have also learned that I can work effectively for 90 minutes, but cannot typically sustain my focus for 4 hours, so I plan accordingly. Allow more margin or buffer to your plan if you are feeling stressed or pressed for time. It's better to have too much time than too little.

Each evening, make an index card with the schedule for the next day. Do not make a vague to do list, but actually make a schedule of what will be done and when. Then, **follow** the schedule and do the things you have scheduled. The unexpected will happen so be sure to allow yourself margin, be flexible, and reduce your goal as needed. Work ahead as much as you possibly can (ideally in order of priority), to reduce your stress when unexpected things show up.

Celebrate and Enjoy!

As you learn the skills and systems needed to accomplish big projects, you are learning the skills of organizing. This process will work for most any major project. Your slash pockets and plan will change and adjust, but the skills can be transferred to any big goal - buying a home, going back to school, starting a business, or anything else you are called to do. I am here to help you get your home and paper organized so you can share your unique purpose with the world.



STEP 1: Identify your project

Name of Project:

Deadline:

Details:



STEP 2: Create slash pockets

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.



STEP 3: Be on target, on time, and on budget

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY



STEP 4: Work your plan and get it DONE

Make your daily index card, get started, and remember: *progress, not perfection!*