

Tip 22

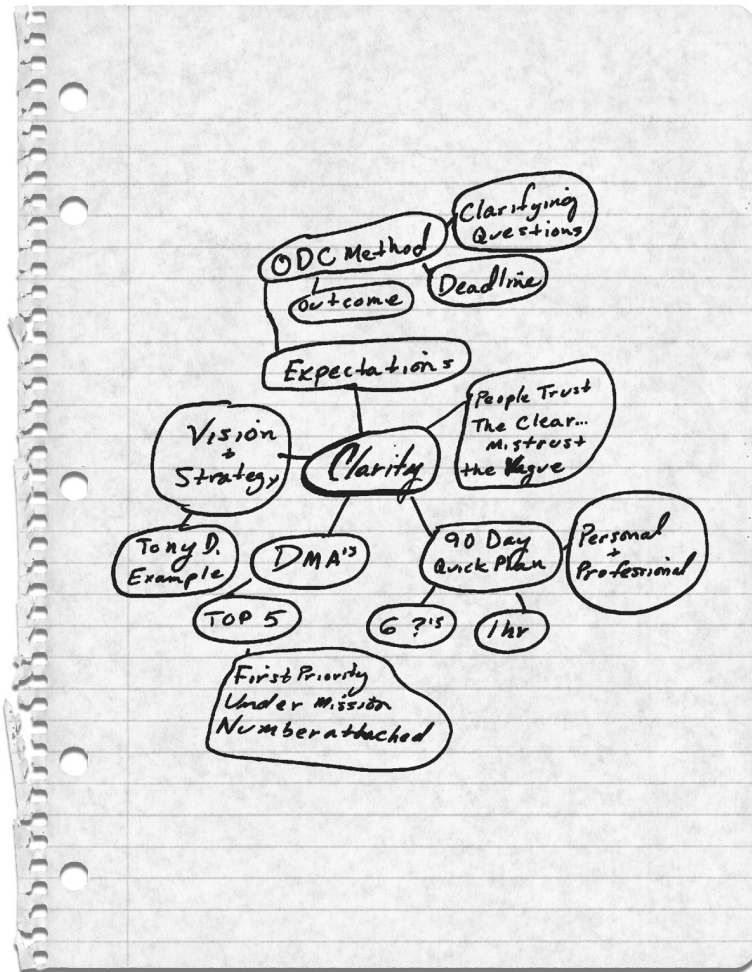
Mind Mapping

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One great way to cut through confusion and speed up organization is by mind mapping, a technique that encourages the free-flow thinking and creativity of all-out brainstorming, but yet organizes more effectively and efficiently so you can actually use it and save time. Designed to go beyond conventional note taking, it allows you to register ideas and concerns in relation to one another, rather than in list form. Mind Mapping has cut my presentation preparation time and book writing preparation time by a third. Learn this method and get ready to **shave significant time off of planning and preparing** for anything.

I've supplied a sample mind map on the facing page, but here are a few steps to get you started:

- **Begin in the middle of your paper.** Write down the question or issue that's on your mind, and then draw a circle around it.



- **Branch out.** With the topic established, draw some branches relating to major thoughts. For a simple example, if you were trying to decide on a restaurant for dinner, your branches might include cost, location, reviews, and wait time.
- **Stick with brief concepts.** Since you want to get your thoughts down quickly and succinctly, short ideas and phrases are best. Abbreviations are fine, as long as you remember what they stand for.
- **Look both ways.** In most cases, your map will start with a central idea and branch out, but feel free to make any other connections that exist.
- **Mix pictures with words.** Don't be afraid to use drawings, colors, graphs, or any other tools that will make your map more vivid. The point is to use your mind, not stick to rules.
- **Go deeper.** Say you want to write an article on leadership but that is too big of a topic. Your first map may have integrity, vision, strategy, and courage around it. You could then go deeper and do a map on integrity, which would point to accountability, character, congruence etc. You can go deep on each of these points that would be in your article called "Integrity in Leadership."

95% of self-improvement books, audio tapes,
and video tapes purchased are not used.

—Donald Whetmore Productivity Institute

The **mind** can be
trained to relieve itself
on **paper**.
—Poet Billy Collins