



BRAIN DUMP GUIDE

4 STEPS TO REDUCE STRESS
AND MAXIMIZE PRODUCTIVITY

Do you ever feel like there are just so many things (and errands and feelings and ideas and reminders) running through your mind that you can't focus enough to get anything done? Like it's all so overwhelming and you feel like there's so much to do, but you don't even know where to start? Me too. That's why I love brain dumps.

What is a brain dump? I learned about brain dumps from my friend and leadership coach [Joy Canupp](#), and a brain dump is exactly what it sounds like: dumping the contents of your mind out onto paper to clear out the mental clutter and give you the clarity to move forward.



A brain dump is effective because it allows you to calm the whirling tornado of thoughts and bring them to a more manageable level. Brain dumps help prevent the endless cycle of worry or nagging ideas because when you take an abstract thought and write it down on paper, you can see it, address it, and even leave it there if you need to move on to something else and come back to it later.

Here's how it works:

1) DUMP

Start by writing down everything you're thinking - and I mean EVERYTHING. Don't hold back and don't limit yourself. Write down everything you need to do, should do, want to do, have thought about doing, should think about doing, how you're feeling, etc. Let yourself be random and unorganized. Keep writing and don't stop until you feel like you've let it all out. Take a few minutes to pray over your dump paper, asking God for peace, strength, and focus.

2) DIVIDE

After you've spent some time getting everything down on paper, start looking for similar categories and grouping similar ideas or tasks together. Categories may include must do, ministry events, prayers, emails to send, feelings, personal/family, errands, important but not urgent tasks, someday, meetings to schedule, Sunday prep, etc. Put each item from your dump in a category list.

3) DESIGNATE

Pick one of your categories, sit down with your calendar/the provided page, and designate when you will do each task OR who you will delegate the task to. Put a date on everything so you designate a specific time to address that task, even if it's 3 weeks from now. Repeat with other categories as priorities allow. For items that are emotional, schedule things that will help (attending a spin class, time with a friend, etc.).

4) DO

Prioritize and jot down the list of tasks you can or must accomplish TODAY, and set the list of other tasks aside for another time. Then jump right in and start working through your do list! Be sure to check things off as you go, celebrating your productivity and accomplishments.

Use the rest of this printable to give it a try and do your own brain dump! This 4-step exercise can be applied to a specific event or project, your overall ministry, or life in general to help you reduce stress and maximize productivity.

DUMP

Date: _____

DIVIDE

Category 1:

Category 2:

Category 3:

Category 4:

Category 5:

Category 6:

DESIGNATE

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday



For Someone Else (Delegate!)

For Later (Set a Date!)



DESIGNATE

Sunday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

For Someone Else (Delegate!)

For Later (Set a Date!)



DESIGNATE

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday



For Someone Else (Delegate!)



For Later (Set a Date!)

DO



self high five for getting organized

