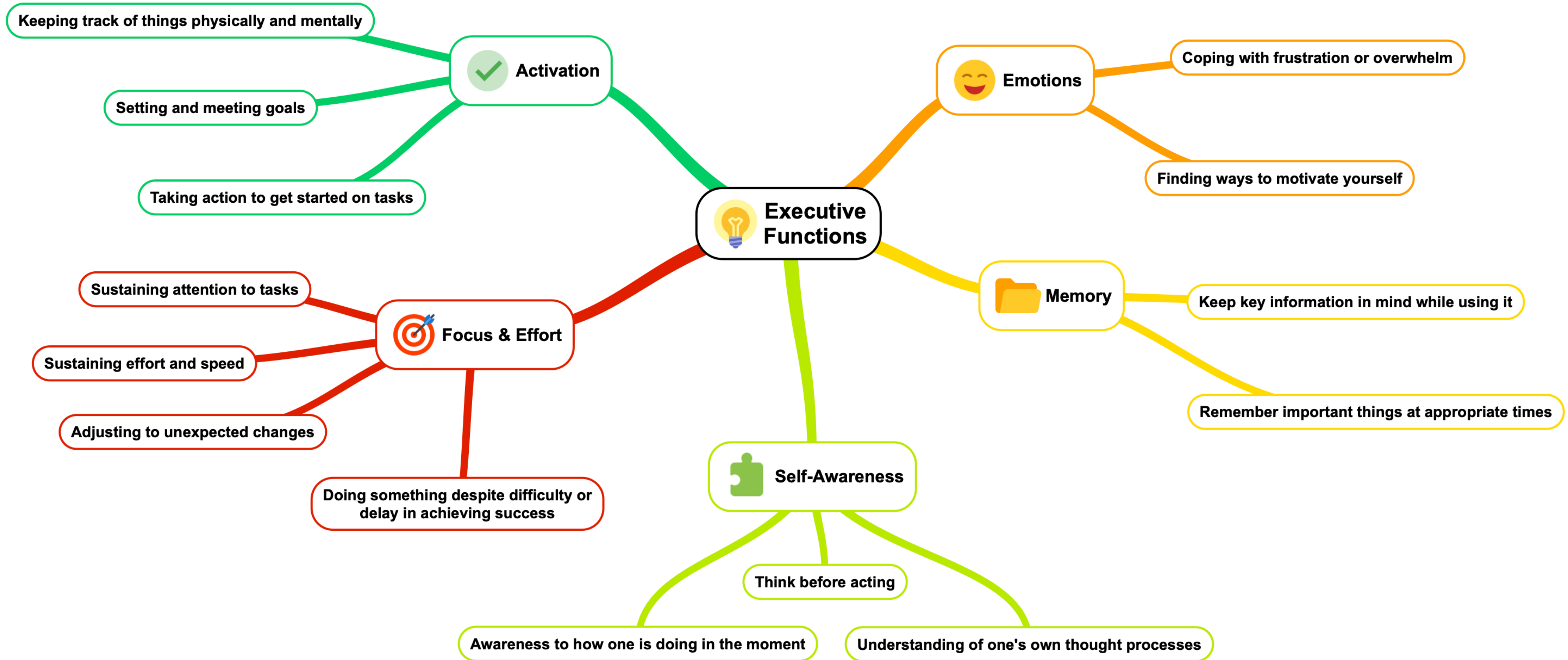


Personal Productivity

Through the Lens of Executive Functions

Andrew Shell — February 24, 2021

Personal Productivity



Procrastination

Do I know what to do?

Activation

- Is the task clearly defined?
- Can I break it down into smaller chunks?
- Do I have all the information I need?
- Do I know what my next action is?
- What should be done first?

Brain Dump

Activation

- What big parts do I see? (Big picture, long-term, milestones, etc)
- What tiny steps do I see?
- What questions do I have?
- What seems risky?
- What am I assuming?
- Who can help me?

Paper Checklist

Activation

- Keep it in front of you
- What's your most important task?
- Max 3 meaningful objectives
- New checklist every day
- Index cards
- Bullet Journal

Schedule on Calendar

Activation, Focus & Self-Awareness

- Put blocks on time on calendar for specific work
- Set as busy
- 1-4 hours ideally
- Decide what you'll finish in that time
- Scale the task for the allotted time
- First draft

Pomodoro Technique

Activation & Focus

- Decide what you'll work on
- Define "done"
- Set timer for 25 minutes
- Work
- 5 minute break
- After 4 work blocks take a 15-30 minute break

Turn Off Notifications

Focus

- Phone notifications / Airplane mode
- Disable Badges
- Delete apps
- Close Outlook & Slack
- Disable E-mail notifications

Why?

Emotions

- What are your values?
- What are your goals?
- Connect projects to your values & goals
- Why are you doing this project?
- What happens if you don't do it?
- Why were you given this task?

Fear of Failure

Emotions

- Failure is normal
- The most successful people fail more often
- It's not failure if you learn something
- Minimize risk
- Ask for help

Confluence

Memory

- Create pages for your projects
- Copy & paste from e-mail
- Write down and answer your questions
- One place for everything
- Easy to collaborate and share

Object Impermanence

Memory

- Forget about things not in front of you
- Post-it notes and piles
- Especially with ADHD
- Visual cues

Perfectionism

Self-Awareness

- Done is better than perfect
- Rooted in fear and uncertainty
- Opportunity cost
- Calibrate your standards
- Time block

Where is the Friction?

Self-Awareness

- Are you avoiding something?
- Did you feel friction?
- What happened?
- When do things go sideways?
- When do things go well?
- Physiology (Tired, hungry, jittery, anxious, etc.)

Questions?