Chapter One Tip Sheet: Determine What To Do
How do you know what to work on?

1. At the end of every workday, take a moment to ask yourself: Was I productive today, or did I just stay busy?

2. Would you like it if people gossiped about you? No? Then stop gossiping about them. It's a hurtful waste of your time.

3. Recalculate your personal Return on Investment periodically. This will help you determine what you need to brush up or cut back on.

4. If one of your tasks properly belongs to someone else, hand it back to them—even if they don't want it. Your needs must come first.

5. Prepare a list of time-wasting things you refuse to do. Keep this Not-To-Do list close, and refer to it frequently.

6. Instead of putting all your tasks on one huge list, establish separate daily High Impact (HIT) and master lists so you can prioritize appropriately.

7. Perform a "brain-dump" of all your important but non-urgent tasks, as well as all the "someday" tasks you want to accomplish. This will form the basis of your master to-do list.

8. Spend 15 minutes a day assigning the tasks on your HIT list P1-P4 priorities, following this schema:

   P1: You'll get fired if this isn't done today
   P2: A valuable long-term activity that should be done soon (often from the master list)
   P3: Someone will be unhappy if you don't do this eventually
   P4: Human "pain-management" activities such as socializing and Facebook

9. Stop viewing your HIT list as a "Must Do" list. Instead, consider it a "Want to Do" list, and stay flexible.

10. Occasionally, triage your master list to cull any tasks you will clearly never do, or that are out of date.