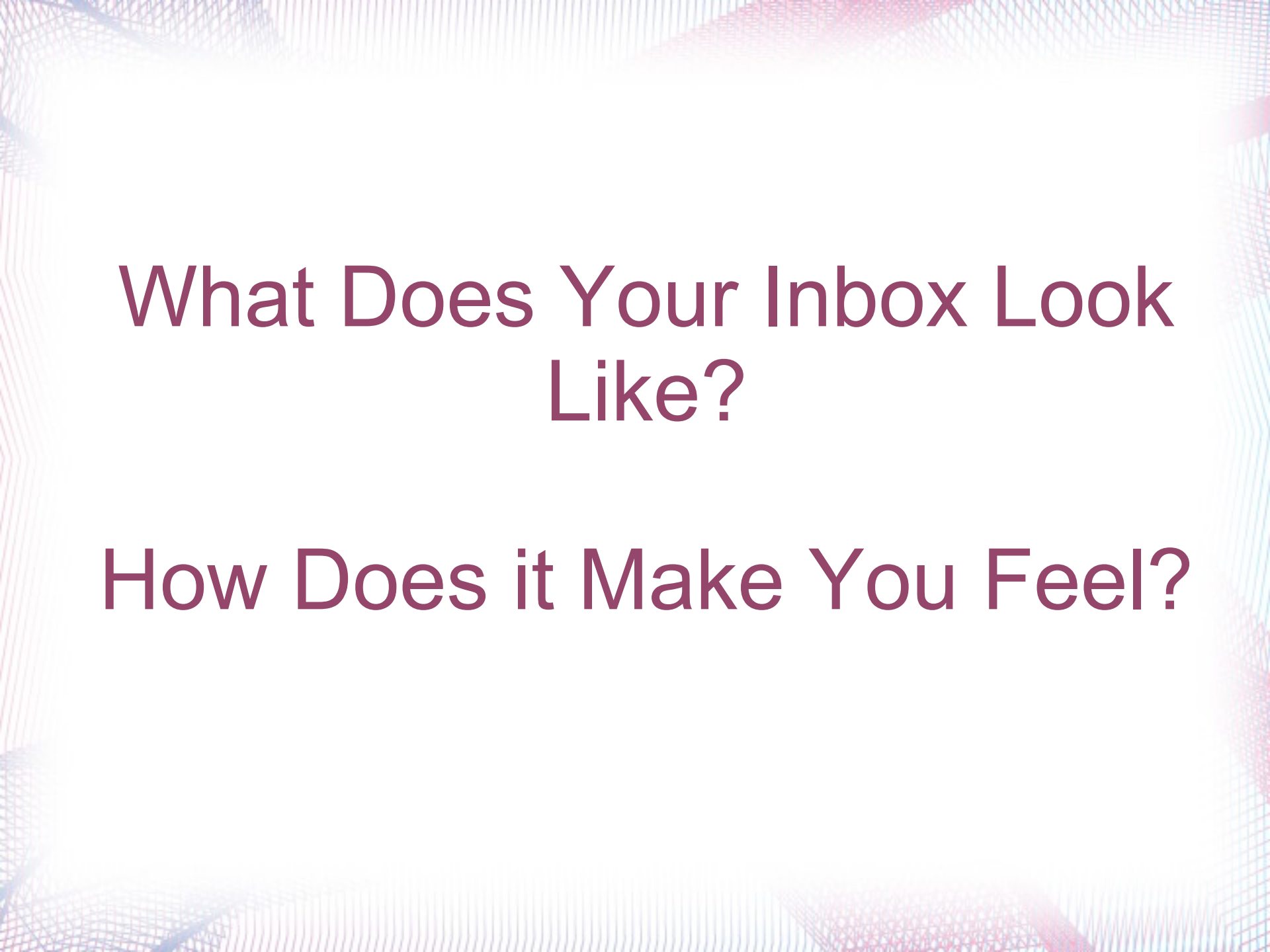


How to Use Inbox Zero to Clear & Manage your Email



What Does Your Inbox Look
Like?

How Does it Make You Feel?

I finish most days with an
empty inbox.

It's not impossible!

Now, it's time to experiment
with the Inbox Zero method.

The Inbox Zero Method



Delete



Delegate



Respond



Defer



Do

Delete

- Be ruthless.
- Delete any email that you aren't going to action/you don't need to hang on to.
- You may have emails that you need to keep for reference purposes – these, you archive (in folders, or just hit the archive button on gmail)
- Don't hang on to stuff for 'later' – unless you have a definite time in mind. If you're not going to look at that link/website/whatever now, you're probably never going to do so. Get rid of it.
- Also use this opportunity to unsubscribe from email lists you don't actually read emails from!

Delegate

- Is there anything in your inbox you can/need to delegate to someone else?
- Send it to them!

Respond

- Now we get to the emails that need a response in the form of... an email :)
- You can work through these chronologically, or make a routine for yourself – maybe you do the fast, easy ones first, then leave the longer, more involved emails until last, or vice versa.
- These longer response emails often become the ones we leave lingering in our inbox, because they're not urgent, but we know we need to reply... in that case, you may like to take advantage of the next step...

Defer

- Sometimes we get emails that will take a long time to deal with, and we don't have that time/or the energy right now to process them.
- Set up a system of deferring these email to deal with at a specific time/day.
- I use Boomerang with Gmail to do this quickly and easily (it's a plugin – find it in the chrome web store).
- If you don't have something like boomerang, you can just have a folder you file these in. But don't let them pile up!

Do

- This is for any emails that require an action.
- Maybe you need to make an order, or schedule in an appointment. Take these tasks OUT of your inbox and into some other form of scheduling software or stationery.
- Your inbox should not be a to-do list!

Change your mindset.

You no longer 'check' your
email: you **PROCESS** it.

Clear your Inbox

- Now, follow the process to clear your inbox
- There is no trick to this, other than dedicating the time to it, being ruthless, and letting go of perfection
- You can either go through in chronological order assigning each email to a category as you go, or go through a few times: first, a purge to delete anything you can, then a pass to archive anything you can, then a pass to actually deal with what's left.
- If you always have emails lingering, your brain is constantly coming back to those, because our brains do not like open loops!

Clear your Inbox

- If this seems overwhelming, be ruthless.
- If you've got old emails lingering that you haven't responded to, chances are you aren't going to/it's not that important. Delete them and move on – if the person really needs you, they'll email you again.
- Remember you don't owe everyone a response. If someone has reached out to you asking you to do something for them (especially if you have no prior relationship to them/it has no value to you) sometimes you just have to let it pass you by.

Now, it's time to maintain

- I recommend you turn OFF email notifications.
- Choose 3x per day to process email, and stick to that for one week.
- Stop looking at your inbox when you aren't in work hours! If you aren't ready to dedicate the time to deal with EVERYTHING in there, don't even look.

Questions?

