



# Jenny Shih, LLC

Coaching and Consulting for Creative Entrepreneurs

## Tame Your Email Inbox for Good

Does email stress you out?

Is your Inbox overflowing?

Does it make you cringe just to look at the volume of email that's there?

I've known people who can have over 500 unread messages at any given time, and they felt like it was a hopeless endeavor to get through it. I learned to tame the email demon years ago and found Inbox bliss.

You can tame your Inbox and get rid of email stress once and for all. It takes a little time and persistence to set up your own email management system, but it is possible to tame this beast.

### **Follow these steps to find Inbox bliss.**

#### **1. Define your problems.**

What's the worst part of your email situation? I've heard things like these:

- I get too many messages.
- I have too many folders.
- I don't know what I'm supposed to respond to.

The list is truly endless.

#### **2. Imagine your ideal email situation.**

If you could design an email system, what would it look like? Here are some examples clients have given me:

- I would know what I need to respond to now and what I can wait to respond to later.
- Old emails would be clearly organized so I could find them later when I need them.
- I would have set times to work on email, so I don't waste so much time on it.

#### **3. Ask yourself, "What in my life is organized and has a good system that's easy for me to follow?"**

Using things that work in your life are a great way to see that (1) you do have organizational capabilities and (2) a system that is properly established for your style will work for you.

#### **4. Ask yourself, “What makes that system tick?”**

What makes your answer to #3 work? Is it the simplicity of it? Do you use a cheat sheet? Is it colorful and fun to do? Whatever it is, find the secret sauce--that may be your ticket to Inbox bliss!

#### **5. Design your system within the constraints of your mail program.**

Now that you know what makes your organized life tick and you know how your ideal email life would look, put them together in a tangible way. Some of my clients created the following solutions for their email:

- Filters to automatically sort the emails they don't need to respond to immediately.
- A to-do folder for emails they have read but still need to take action on.
- A set schedule for when they respond to emails related to a class they're leading.
- Folder organization that is not too much and not too few.

#### **6. Complete a mental walk-through to see if you have any gaps in your system.**

Once you've designed a solution to achieve email bliss, mentally walk through the action of “sitting at your computer and checking email.” Take yourself step by step through the process. Imagine the day and times you check email. Imagine the different types of emails you receive. Imagine the actions you need to take after you read an email. Ensure that you have created a personal system to handle all of the possibilities. When you find gaps, patch your system and re-check to make sure you've got it all covered.

#### **7. Set up your new system.**

Make your new folders. Create your cheat sheet. Set your email schedule. Do whatever you need to do to be able to start using your new system.

#### **8. Make a map on how to get from where you are now to where you want to be.**

You've got chaos right now, and you also have your system set up. Now figure out the plan to get from chaos to bliss.

#### **9. Take small steps on your map to get from here to there.**

The new system is in place. The map has been drawn. Take small steps. Little bites at a time. Use your new system immediately, and convert the “old stuff” (old emails, old folders, old stress) into the new system as you have time. Set aside a regular time to work at it and put an end date on it. You can get there.