Email Management – what becomes available to you when your email is under control?

Consider this simple framework (*) and customize as needed

1. **Start by creating a system for processing emails: the key is to separate actionable from non-actionable** *(you do this once and adjust as needed moving forward):*

   - Create 'Reference' folder(s) - for anything you want to keep. Add sub-folders as needed.
   - Create 'Action' (or To-Do) folder(s) – for any action you need to take which is more than 2 minutes. Add sub-folders by subject, time, specific action (read, decide, communicate, print, etc)
   - Create 'Waiting for' folder(s) – for anything you are waiting for. Add sub-folders as needed.
   - Make these folders visually distinct (adding "@" or "A" to names; showing as Favorites)

2. **Process emails – approach:**

   It may be easier to start by searching or sorting by: From or Sender, Subject, or Received (time)

   For each email in your Inbox:

   - If there is an action you need to take – use '2 minute' rule:
     - If it takes less than 2 minutes: Do it now
     - If it takes more than 2 minutes: Move it to your 'Action' folder
   - If someone else needs to take an action and your work depends on it:
     - Move it to your 'Waiting for' folder
   - If no action by you or anyone else is needed, do you need to keep the email?
     - If yes: move it to your 'Reference' folder
     - If no: delete

   For each email in your 'Action' folder or as you decide to do it now:

   - Take the action
   - Move the original email as appropriate: 'Reference' or 'Waiting for'; or delete it.

   For each email in your 'Waiting for' folder:

   - If still waiting – you may need to follow-up. You can use the '2 minute' rule for that action.
   - If you received a response – process it like any other email.
   - Move the original email to 'Reference' or delete it.

3. **Process your emails – plan/schedule and do it consistently:**
   - Process your current emails; the first time may take a few hours for a large number of emails.
   - Plan that every time you look at emails, you process them using the approach described in #2. Plan/Schedule when it is best for you to do that during the day, possibly multiple times.
   - Ongoing check-in: How is it working for you? Celebrate and adjust the approach as necessary.

(*) *Based on Getting Things Done by David Allen*

https://gettingthingsdone.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/GettingEmail.pdf