Tickler File System

A tickler file system is a reminder, something that tickles your memory. Originally, *ticklers* were special feathers used to tickle churchgoers who nodded off during the sermon. Today tickler files are used so that you can purposely forget information until it is needed.

Calendars are the simplest tickler system. They provide a place to write down appointments and important events. However, a hanging file folder system is recommended to provide *temporary storage* for date-sensitive papers—papers to be reviewed at a later date, bills to be paid, letters to be answered, decisions to make, tickets purchased for a specific event, cards to be sent, follow-up information and a variety of other items that you will need on a specific day. Tickler files are active, to be used daily on a constantly rotating basis. If used effectively, this system will efficiently manage mail, information, future appointments and time-related paperwork. If you cannot do everything in today's file, you can transfer the leftover tasks to another day, another week or another month. However, no matter which system you choose for managing information, none will work unless you refer to it regularly. Calendars, to-do lists, and tickler files can be combined and coordinated for effective time management.

Make your own Tickler File System

Any hanging file folder will do, but durable Pendaflex file folders – reinforced lamination on the top and bottom edges – are strongest and last longer. Using hanging file folders allows this system to be kept in your desk drawer or easily accessible file cabinet. You will want to refer to it frequently throughout the day.

This is a rotating system. Paperwork is distributed in the appropriate day or month. As each *day* passes that empty hanging folder becomes the corresponding *day* of the next *month*. As each *month* passes that folder becomes the same *month* for the next year. Always place the *daily* folders behind next *month's* folder as you use them (refer to diagram above). As you do so, you will notice that next month begins to move forward. As it gets closer to the front, begin to disperse paperwork to appropriate days for that month. On the first day of the month place that month's folder in the very back and it is now ready to receive information for next year. Having two different colored folders -- *daily* and *monthly* -- you can easily see how the rotating system works as the month begins to move forward and the daily folders become part of the next month.

Each day you refer to the appropriate folder and remove the work for that day. Make it easy on yourself. Do not think you can accomplish more than you have time to do. Be realistic—you have only 24 hours in a day.

Please contact me if you have any questions on how to make and use a Tickler File System.