042-getting-things-done-gtd-review-reflect-productivitycast....

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SPEAKERS

Art Gelwicks, Voiceover Artist, Raymond Sidney-Smith, Francis Wade

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Voiceover Artist   00:00

Are you ready to manage your work and personal world better to live a fulfilling, productive life? Then you've come to the right place. Productivity cast, the weekly show about all things productivity here. Your hosts Ray Sidney-Smith and Augusto Pinaud with Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks.

Raymond Sidney-Smith   00:17

Welcome everybody to productivity cast the weekly show about all things productivity. I'm recently Smith, and I'm joined here this morning with Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks. Good morning gentlemen,

Francis Wade   00:27

morning.

Raymond Sidney-Smith   00:28

Good day, good day to you all. And Good day, to our listeners, wherever you might be

listening from today, we are going to be talking about getting things done. This has been in a series of episodes where we've been discussing getting things done the art of stress, free productivity by David Allen, and really having a conversation around each of the fundamental components of the GTD methodology. And so we are going to be talking about reviewing and reflecting. So in the first edition of getting things done back in 2001, David Allen called this stage reviewing. And I think it created a number of different confusions for people. And in the march 2015 edition, actually, subsequent in the 2011, making it all workbook, he changed the terminology to reflecting. And then in getting things done in the march 2015 edition, pe changed the term to reflecting. So reflecting is what we're going to be talking about today. And what we're gonna do is we're going to co define or at least talk about the differences in which we see reflecting as a fundamental function of our own productivity systems. Then we're going to talk about how each of us really implements this concept, the skill of reflecting in our own systems, because we, we went from the capture process, we then clarify that information, and then organized it. And now this is that point where things are on our lists, they're in our calendars, they're saved as reference material. And now we need to do something with those things. Who wants to start us off with defining reflecting in your own way, how do you how do you all define reflecting,

Francis Wade   02:18

it's actually a function of the way you have your tasks organized. So if you have them organized in lists, then reflecting is about checking in a different point to today to make sure that you are working on the best possible task at any point in time. So you're it requires going back in making sure that you're looking at the best possible list based on context, choosing, choosing the right context, going through the items that are belong to that context, and then making sure that you're executing the best possible one. So there's this if you have lists, and lots of less than it requires this kind of recursive kind of checking, completing the action checking completing, If, however, you you don't, don't necessarily follow his prescription, which I don't, and you set up a plan for the day, which is detailed and you have reminders, then the checking checking isn't as important they're reviewing the reviewing actually just happens once in the morning, and then you're following a plan for the day and you want to revisit your plan, if the there's disruption to the original plan. So I think it depends on the tools that you use, if you're using lots of lists, lots of reflecting, if you're not using lots of lists, then you can reflect once or twice per day, my take

Art Gelwicks   03:47

See, I look at reflecting a little bit differently. Because I look at it more as a bigger picture aspect of this, when you take you go down the path of reviewing that's a detail level. But reflecting is more if I use analogy, if you were standing by like, say, a lake and looking at the

surface of the water, the reflection that you're seeing of everything around, you can get this great idea of what's around. But nothing's entirely in razor sharp focus, and you're not trying to get it in razor sharp focus, you're just trying to get the overall feel as to what everything you're viewing. And when I think about reflecting on what I have within my system, it's is are the things that I'm doing taking me in the directions that I ultimately want to be going or need to be going not down to a specific step one, step two, step three. But the larger paths involved is am I going in the right professional direction, am I going in the right personal direction. I know it's more of a touchy feely kind of approach. But that's the way I view the term because it helps me wrap my head around how this fits in as whether that's an hourly or a daily or a weekly thing. For me, it's, it's kind of an item of need, when I'm doing something, if I just kind of my spider sense, tingles a little bit says is this doesn't feel right, I have to back up and look at it a little bit and say, okay, is everything still going in the right directions? Yep. Okay, I'll figure out what's wrong, then move from there

Raymond Sidney-Smith 05:20

is something that I always think about when it comes to reflecting is that the reviews skill itself needs to be split among as you were talking about art, you know, kind of the higher level stuff and then what Francis was talking about which was the more granular what's happening today, stuff I consider if you're doing any, any level of hourly or daily reflecting that is the that is the short spurt, very quick review. So I consider those short reviews. And then the long review or long Taylor reviews happened on the monthly, quarterly and annually. And then David Allen, of course, has created this structure. This methodology he he's termed as the weekly review. And for listeners, we'll be doing an entire episode on the weekly review. Since it's such a big topic, we're going to do an entire episode on that. So we're actually going to act like the weekly review doesn't exist here in this episode today. And we're going to talk about the other ways in which we implement reviewing and consider it that way. But many years ago, I read a book called 18 minutes by Peter Bregman and what Bregman offered was this concept of spending 18 minutes a day, preparing for checking in and reflecting on Wednesday. And so you took five minutes in the morning, a minute at each hour of the day of an eight hour day, and then five minutes at the end of the day. And that's where the 18 minutes comes from. And I really liked the idea of it. So I, of course, develop my own system, my own method for for checking in hourly throughout my day. And it actually happens now every half hour throughout the day. And so every 25 and 55 of the hour, I actually go ahead and have a have a timer that actually goes off if I'm not in a meeting, or i I'm you know, not focused on something exclusively, then this little timer, of course, just has me check in so that I can make sure that I'm focused and staying on track with regard to the things that I want to be doing. And not everyone is really built for this. But it's a it's a type of reflecting that I think is very useful if you are having any level of focus or Attention Deficit issues and you don't have to be at HD or or have that level of diagnosed issue for you to

have attentional deficits everybody does. And so it really depends on the level of your life and where things are going. If it's fast moving, and so forth, it's very difficult for me, if I'm presenting a workshop or seminar, I'm fully focused in that moment. So I'm, I'm used to doing that. And then, of course, I have the very, very opposite of that when I come to the office, because now it's answering email and making phone calls, and then having to adjust to focusing on writing material or doing very focused work. And so I need to be able to have a system for being able to check in with myself so that I don't lose myself in hours and hours o time. So I like this idea of sort of checking in every 30 minutes and kind of assessing where I've been, and where I'm where I'm going. And then each of those, each of those levels kind of goes up, and we'll talk about that throughout the episode. But I just wanted to kind of explain that a little bit. So you all have an understanding that there is kind of these short, quick reviews, David Allen talks about the idea of his thoughts on it, or that it should only take a few seconds a day for you to kind of check your lists at first, you check your calendar, right, you check in with your calendar, what's going on today. And then you check your actions list. So you kind of have a lay of the land and then you're you're off to the races. I think it's probably a little bit more complicated than that, but we'll talk about that

Francis Wade   09:12

i agree i think it's we're heading in this direction already, but I think he he he's underplayed the importance of of the few, a few seconds, he talks about, I think, is a way more than just c casual glance or sort of a which context you happen to find yourself in kind of approach.

Raymond Sidney-Smith   09:33

Absolutely. And, and I think that, yeah, and I think that he paints a fairly broad brush there, he I'm quoting from the book now, he says, people often ask me, How much time do you need? Do you spend looking at your system? My answer is simply as much time as I need to feel comfortable about what I'm doing and quote, and so he kind of paints this very broad brush of do what you feel like doing, and so that you feel comfortable. And it's a it's a little bit more complicated than that.

Art Gelwicks   10:01

Yeah, but it's a valid point. I mean, it's a terribly fungible answer, you can do as much as you need, and everybody looks at and goes, Okay, fine. That didn't help me any. But it really comes down to, that's the measure. I mean, when I think about things, I'll give you the example walking into the building this morning, I'm walking up and I'm going, you know, just in the back of my mind, I don't feel like I have a real good handle on what's going on in the

next two weeks. So I'm going to spend a little bit of time today and just kind of recap everything, there's that feeling you get, your hair goes up on the back your neck, when you're like, that just don't feel like I got a grasp on this. I think that's where this fits. I mean, that's basically what he's describing.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 10:42

Yeah, I agree. I'm going to push back a little bit though art because this, this comes to the, to my experience, and what what I frequently find people doing is that, if you are, are highly sensitive, highly analytical, and very much stuck in the weeds of details, that these kinds of reflecting moments can become minutes to hours to a day of overwhelm, and seemingly mired in the potential reality of the day. And so I'm very frequently explaining to people that we need to, we need to sort of kind of check ourselves and understand what our either mean or modal averages are, as it relates to how much time it takes to get up to get a benefit out of something. So I agree with you that that someone who's who's just comfortable and locked in and ready to run there, they're going to have this very short review moments, short reflecting moments, and they're going to be off to the races. But for those who are struggling, and might be dealing with emotional issues, or mental health issues at any given moment in time, and, you know, it doesn't have to be diagnosed problem for you to be, you know, experiencing low mood or something like that, it becomes then that much more difficult, and you need to start figuring out, well, how much time on average Do I need to put in in order to get a benefit out and making that cost benefit analysis very quickly allows you to be able to say, Okay, I'm now sitting here for an hour reviewing my list, this is too much and and making a cut off and getting yourself out of it. So I think I think we probably agree on this, which is that there's a there is a rate of diminishing return once you get to a certain point.

Art Gelwicks 12:32

Yeah, I would, I would agree with you that I think we're talking about the exact same issue from two different ends, because you have some people that are highly analytical who will go off of a specific measure. And I think that's where they trip when they look at the system like GTD that doesn't give them a specific measure, you know, gets that answer of, it'll take you as long as it takes you and they go, Well, that's no answer for me, and then move on. Or the other end of the equation. People who are like, Yeah, I just need to a better sense of well being around this. And then they look at hard numbers and hard metrics. And you're supposed to execute these certain and they're like, Whoa, way too much structure here. If I were to quantify it, I'd say it's going to take as long as it takes for you to feel comfortable with it. And that's the first thing that you need to do is learn what that yardstick is because that yardstick does vary from individual to individual.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 13:31

The important thing I think, to to lift out of this is to recognize that, like you said, are Know thyself. And the the other side is to start to get a metric for how much energy you've put in to the benefit that you've gotten out of the the reviewing and reflecting time in at least a daily practices, as, as I see it, you know, these kind of shorter reviews are much more readily capable of figuring out whether or not that energy that you invested brought forth output that was worth it, I think once we get to the, what David Allen calls bigger picture reviews, then it becomes a little bit more money, I think it becomes a little bit more difficult to identify whether the time you invested in one particular item within a larger context review was was worth the whole lot of time that you put in and mass time you've put in to that particular longer review, I want to talk a little bit about these bigger picture reviews. Then, as David Allen talks about, so he talks about this idea of stepping back and looking at our larger larger outcomes. So there's, there's the daily review or for me hourly, and daily reviews, where I'm checking in with my calendar, I'm checking in with my projects, lists for the day. And and then I'm basically touching base with myself throughout the day at set points when I don't have meetings, but we need to, we need to, of course, step back again, there's the weekly review. We'll talk about that in the future than there is kind of other bigger picture reviews. What what other reviews Do you otherwise do in your productivity systems? Yeah, I do a

Francis Wade 15:21

review is a bit of a strong words, I, I wouldn't do the timed reviews that you mentioned, every driven by the clock per se, but I do I do what's called what I call switching, which is a review at the end of a task. So when the task is is finished, or I get a signal to start a new task, either one, I asked myself, okay, what's the next best action to take, like, continue with the task I was doing, even though it's run over the allotted time, or I have another meeting or another commitment. If I'm at the end of a task, what's the what's my original plan for the day. So it would already have a plan that says, I'd be working on this thing at four o'clock. And I asked, okay, do I stick to that plan at this point, given what I know now at four o'clock, but I didn't know at eight o'clock? How does that tie into the new information that I have that at four o'clock? How does it tie into my larger goals, my larger commitments, and what I know of my sort of the vision for myself over again, I asked myself, sometimes same kind of questions you mentioned, which is, what's my goal for the next six months, and is that I learned something today, that requires me to change my plan for four o'clock. So it all happens, it should happen very quickly. But for me, it happens at the the, the nexus of one task or, and another is the one and the other one is the, the trigger for a new task to stop.

But it's all driven by that plan that I create that the beginning of the day,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 17:05

you know, the interesting thing you talk about Francis is this is this concept of a project based review in and kind of reflecting on things at that point. And this is this is actually like, this is black belt level stuff. So folks who are just starting out with GTD, but I want to explain this for some of our more advanced listeners, which is that while I have structured my own review schedule, so that my weekly reviews alternate among a monthly quarterly and an annual review process, what I do is that when major projects, what I kind of term major projects, which could be different for you. But when major projects and I actually do the review, then and and so when whatever my next larger review is, say, if I have a monthly review coming up, or I have a quarterly review coming up, well, one of those reviews is actually going to be removed, because I'm going to do the review at the time in which I've, I'm debriefing on the end of that major project. And then I will just resume the monthly or quarterly reviews. So monthly, every every fourth review of my of my weekly review is going to be the monthly review until I get to a quarter, which is basically every 12th review is then removed from the weekly or the monthly and becomes a quarterly review, very simple in construct. But when that major project ends, you know, maybe there are three of them per year, well, that's going to be my opportunity to say, Okay, well, whatever other monthly or quarterly review I had in place, I'm removing that from the schedule. And I'm going to now place it in this upcoming weekly review. And, and that, for me, has really reduced the lag that I have experienced in correcting course throughout the year, and moving from one major project to the next, presumably, or progressing on all kinds of things. So if you if you've been, you know, practicing GTD for quite a number of years, and you've you've felt kind of stagnation at points in the year, I would consider it, I would invite you to kind of think about how you can use that project based concept as a as an anchor in your calendar year as Francis was talking about, because it can be very useful

Art Gelwicks 19:21

if you roll this up a little higher to corporate level or high level project management methodologies. It's very similar to what you would have at the end of a traditional waterfall project, where you're going to do the equivalent of the post more than once the project's done to determine the lessons learned and those learnings or if you roll it into the Agile world, where you're doing sprint level reviews on a periodic basis, like every two weeks to make sure that the work that needed to be done was done in the new work that needs to be done as cued up and ready to go. Both of those approaches can be integrated into what we've talked about so far. Without D railing the GTD review process, it really gives us an opportunity to address things on an individual basis and address things on an ongoing

basis.

Francis Wade 20:11

Yeah, I think I think people need to people need to sort of craft their on combination of time reviews and triggered reviews, let's call it that and have them occur on a daily basis, project basis, task basis, sort of arrange it a range of the arrange them so that they support what they are up to. And Or another way of saying it is so that they they never end up in that drift that you talk to both either daily drift, weekly drift, yearly drift, because really, in our whole life is made of sort of these commitments or nor or fulfillment of them. And, you know, it's you always hear the stories of people who get to the end of their life. And, you know, they had a 50 year drift or a graphic novel thing I, you know, I should have spent more time with your family and less time in the office. And so we're also warning at warding off that feeling of regret, when you look back at shorter a long period of time and say, Okay, I will just wasted that. Oh, yeah, I think it's a, it's a personal sort of crafting,

Art Gelwicks 21:20

we're throwing up the word review a lot where we started with reflection, and I just want to make sure we're not confusing anybody between the two?

Raymond Sidney-Smith 21:27

Right? We definitely, we definitely are talking about reflection. And, and the end the the core, the core of what David Allen really is talking about, when he talks about reflecting is in the bigger picture context here that we're talking about is, is basically everything that that falls above horizon three, right. So horizon three and above, which is goals, vision, purpose, and principles. And so the, the goal for for us is kind of flushing out what we do in the process of dealing with those higher level reflecting activities and the skills necessary and perhaps the tools that we use in order to get there. And so I wanted to spend a little bit of time talking about that, I presume that we could probably, and I'm looking in the book right now to see Yeah, he does explicitly say that he that that the bigger picture reviews he's talking about as horizon three, four and five. And he says here, and I'm quoting from the book, the explicit focus of this book is not teasing out those horizon three to five levels urging you to operate from a higher perspective is, however, it's implicit purpose to assist you in making your total life expression more fulfilling and better aligned with a bigger game you're all about. And so so I'm curious how you all organize your, your higher level reflecting Francis, you talked a little bit about how you do yours and art Do you have, do you have a process or a kind of a defined way in which you do this, or is it more organic,

Art Gelwicks 23:13

it's, it does tend to be very organic, but I do, I have started to push more along specific targeted silos of assessment just because it kind of needs it. So things like profession, career, family, personal looking at those, if you want to use the GTD analogy of the horizons levels, those particular flight pads, and making sure that what I'm evaluating fits the end objectives that I've laid out for myself on those, this is where I struggle a little bit. And I'm going to backtrack a little bit here, because I'm looking at the six horizons of focus right now, myself, this is again, it's very, I want to say it's soft and fuzzy. And I can see how it would take an analytical person and give them a Logitech because they're gonna look at this go 50,000 foot level, what is the work you are here to do on this planet with your life? Really, it's like a spear conversation. How, where do I even start with that, and I and I think the classic definition that I get into is, when you think strategic analysis, you're always starting at the highest level and working your way down. But when I look at this stuff from, from GTD, I almost want to start at the lowest level and work my way up and see at least in the first pass, or early passes, where have the decisions I have made in the actions I am taking right now taking me and do I want to go there

Raymond Sidney-Smith 24:59

and I with and I would think that David Allen would would fully agree with you. I think that he fundamentally doesn't believe in the not fundamentally but I believe that he believes Yeah, I believe that he believes that those higher level horizon things are already figured out for most people. And so therefore, he doesn't commit himself to trying to figure that out for you. And I putting words in his mouth. I mean, I'm clearly putting words

Art Gelwicks 25:30

No, no, I get it. But I think and this is a common across all of them, not just the GTD but so many other methodologies as well. It's extremely, I mean, you look at classic project management, you start with a vision statement, and a mission statement, and then an objective statement, you know, functional requirements and technical requirements and all this happy stuff. And you can spend so much time analyzing that you drop into that classic analysis paralysis, and never actually get anything moving forward. I look at reflection almost is the way and this is for me, it's the way of cheating your review. So if, you know, you know, if I look at my schedule, and I go, you know what, I just need to get a grasp on this, I don't have enough time to sit down and do a full legitimate review. But I'm going to do a high level I'm going to look over everything. Yeah, everything looks like it's pretty much okay To me, that's the reflection part of it, it's a softer version of it. So do I have a structure for it not as much as I do on the review. Because I think that would actually undermine at least for

me, it would undermine the benefit of that more fungible reflection mindset,

Francis Wade 26:44

though we have phone that have sort of worked for me, are actually involve other people. So when I, when I had a coach, a regular coach, sort of a, and we had bi weekly calls, I think once every two weeks, I had a a decently set, let's call them 30,000, 40,000 feet goals. And the calls that I had with my coach were a regular way of reflecting on my progress in accomplishing them, I stopped, you stop having a coach A few years ago, and I started sort of doing it on my own. Then I put in place a couple years ago, weekly meeting with my wife, who's, who works with me and my company. And sure enough, just having her as an accountability partner has made a huge difference in how I reflect at all levels. Well, not all of maybe 20,000 feet up. So I may may, it's much I found it much easier to think about those levels, and how they play out on a weekly basis, or on a quarterly basis, or an annual basis. When I've had someone else who is also committed, it's it's much, much, much, much, much easier, I wouldn't take the approach that you've taken rear, which is to have the regular individual meetings, even though I might schedule them in my calendar to me, they wouldn't have the impact of having another person work with me on them, the other person seems to add that huge extra on for extra magic that I can't produce by sitting at my own and look sitting on my own and looking at these goals. So I'd offer that as a as another tactic is to have someone who is willing to hold you to account to some degree in accomplishing goals at these different levels, and working them into your daily activities,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 28:39

I think you bring up a really great point, which is to clarify how these kinds of things happen. So one of the things about my bigger picture reviews, and I think that people frequently I think you're hearing the same confusion other people do is that somehow I'm lone wolf in this, that I'm just sitting in my office with the door closed and do my review all by myself, by my lonesome. That is, actually very, very, not the process, right. So with everything in my world, it requires me to be collaborative in nature. So most of my, my bigger picture review and reflecting time is actually spent in scheduling meetings with other people, mostly My, my, my, my staff, and my, my vendors, my colleagues, and figuring out what needs to happen because nothing in my world happens in a vacuum. So it does require quite a bit of collaboration. And so those are actually I don't have my, my review checklist in front of me, but on the the monthly and the quarterly reviews, those actually are just like the weekly review a checklist of things to do and on them is scheduled meeting with so and so scheduled meeting with so and so. So that I am going through the process of doing that kind of planning that's necessary to be able move things forward so that I'm not only meeting my in Gretchen Rubens perspective in better than before. And the four tendencies is I'm trying

to meet both my inner expectations and my outer expectations, to be able to move forward on plans. And I can't plan in a vacuum, I need to make sure that I know what other people are doing what other people are thinking and to be collecting together those ideas. And sometimes that's a quick email, and maybe I'll get the response back pretty quickly. And sometimes that's a full fledged, you know, meeting with an agenda, we're going down all of the fundamental parts of a forthcoming project or a product project in progress that needs a moment for us to look at, where are we and where do we need to go in in the course of that thing. And so many of my own, what I would consider kind of personal projects, projects that I'm project managing, I need other people in order to be able to move those things forward. So I agree with you, Francis, I think it's really powerful to have other people involved. And your higher level reviews should not only be the sitting in your comfy chair and journaling kind of thoughts and brainstorming and mind wandering kind of stuff, there's a time and a place for that. But, but my fairly analytical mind likes to have a checklist of things that are concrete to do at each of those times, which isn't, is which is basically an a pending of my weekly review. So those other those, those monthly and quarterly reviews are just adding new checklist items to my existing weekly review. And it's looking at it on usually a longer time horizon, but not necessarily always right, because some things are just sooner rather than later. But the reality is, is that I'm looking at the major projects list, and I'm trying to make sure that I'm killing things appropriately adjusting them, and so on, so forth. And then appropriately meeting or skip during those meetings with people as I need to When, when, whenever I'm talking to either audiences, or in the GTD meetups, or otherwise people frequently have trouble finding time to reflect how, how do how do you make time? How does one make time to reflect and what's the process to getting there? Not just I think a lot of people could say, well, make time. Right. And it's the, the fatherly edict right? But But how do we how do we get to that point, if we've never actually done it before. And, you know, I, I faced that problem when I was in my teen years of being a and an excellent student, but not being a very excellent manager of of my time. Beyond that, because at that time in my life, everything all time was managed for me, you know, I didn't have extraneous time there was there was always schoolwork, family activities or extracurricular activities and social activities that were designed for me, everybody had my time taken already and honestly it was very comfortable it was very for me that was very useful because I didn't have to think about it. And so then functionally after leaving the the that environment yeah I happen to have graduated high school a little bit earlier than other people I was young and and so you know, I I was dysfunctional upon leaving primary and secondary school and entering in the college years because I didn't have structure any longer what was the structure for me was someone someone else's so I had to create that level of structure and and so I fell into the covey world and the point of the story was the fact that covey really gave me a framework for being able to look at mission, vision purpose and kind of drill downward. And that gave me pretty strong skills to be able to do the top down approach. And I feel like the David Allen GTD methodology gave me a strong bottoms up approach. And the two together

really combined today a strong view from both ends. So I'm curious how you all get to that point of knowing how to get to the kinds of reflecting that you want to do

Francis Wade 34:30

the path, you took it in some ways, could look haphazard, you know, sort of serendipitous and chaotic, but I i and part I took is also It looks very similar to yours in terms of the amount of sort of bouncing from higher level to low level, picking up skills at one level, changing the approach that higher level of changing the approach level, I don't know that there's a I don't think that there's like the one book to pick up that explain what everyone should do. I think there's a kind of a maturity, if I look at my own sort of life path that in my in the 90s in my I guess that was in my 30s, I didn't really know what I wanted to do with my life professionally, I don't think I knew was I wanted to do it in Jamaica. And I was living in the States at the time. So everything was geared around. Okay, how do I get back to Jamaica? How do I make that happen, but professionally, I really didn't, didn't know. And I think it's a function of maturity rather than system. Because then I had the copy system mind, I had a couple other high level planning activities that I engaged in. And I even have some notes from way back when, you know, I set some high level goals, but they were in retrospect, there were a matures, put it that way, know that I'm a little bit older, I have a lot more gray here. I about 10 years ago, or maybe five or 10 years ago, I sort of resigned myself to the fact that not resigned, but I sort of on the the fact that the rest of my career is going to be spent around in in our own time is productivity and not going to give this theme up, I'm going to go to my deathbed thinking about, you know, how can I improve the way people will have people improve the way they do their scheduling, for example. So that's going to be a part of my life. So I just sort of park that as a cornerstone of not my entire life. But it's a big part of my life, professionally, right up until I kicked the bucket. And once I made that decision, my mind settled itself to know that that's going to be a cornerstone, and I can play the long game and write a book and put together content that's going to be make no sense today, but might make sense in 10 years time. So it changed the way I do my work. Because set this high level goal. The point is, though, I couldn't have set that high level goal at any earlier point. So it's sort of a function of maturity and great here, and I don't think there is a way to shortcut that process or shortcut that evolution by following a particular methodology. I think it you know, we're human, we have different commitments that change over time, we're subject to our psychology and to the different steps that we need to take to get things done. And that seems to the that seems to always be in flux and be evolving. I don't think there is a nice package that I could offer tour listeners that says, Okay, here's how you handle all levels at the same time, you sort of have to grow into it. And with technology changing so fast, I don't think there's a shortcut. I think it's just a matter of staying very, very aware and very, very willing to adapt your approach based on Oh, look, there is a new way of thinking about structuring high level goals. Oh, look, there is a new

way to think about scheduling your time. Or look, there is a new philosophy that I could use to adapt to the one that I'm already using, I think there is that sort of somewhat chaotic process that we all go through.

Art Gelwicks 38:20

Yeah, for me, it's gone to basically two different routes. I come from a very traditional project management background. And I've also gone down the day timer, day planner, Palm Pilot, to every predefined, pre printed pre coated methodology for trying to get things organized over the years, partially out of demand, partially out of personal interest. But there's part of this to me that I take very personally and it's summed up in the phrase from Socrates Know thyself, I find productivity in is something that is very much a matter of understanding yourself, your best behaviors, your your weaknesses, and then adapting the systems to work within those frameworks and work within your own personal framework with the recognition that there is no system for more than two people in its original define state. Everything must be adapted and tuned. So when I look at reflection, that's my yardstick is how do I address these things? What is my mindset? Where are my weaknesses, where my strengths the challenge, I think that this entails is, it takes a lot of the lack of a better term navel gazing to get to that point, and it's a constant thing, you have to constantly look at, what are you doing? How do you do it? How are you not doing it? Well, recognizing that for good, bad, or otherwise, you will never get any of these systems. Hundred percent, right. And the odds are very good, you will be changing and adapting for the rest of your life. And that's really fine. That's the way it's supposed to be. Static systems do not grow, they do not evolve. So for me, that's the biggest challenge. And that's what I've spent a lot of my time and started to spend more time helping people and organizations understand that a defined methodology is great. But methodologies don't get things done, the people using the methodologies get the things done. And those are the lowest common denominator. And that's what you have to think about is how are they going to work within this. So what I say the challenge of the systems is not the systems, it's the people using the systems. And it's not to say that that's a bad thing. They are the most important aspect of them, it's losing sight that I think is what derails so many people and so many of these tools and you wind up with this flux back and forth of I'm going to try this one. I'm going to try that one. Oh, this one looks like it has an answer in that one has it looks like an answer. Yeah, they all may have parts to the overall answer for you. But maybe not for somebody else that I think is the biggest hard part people look for the answer and there isn't one and there never will be

Raymond Sidney-Smith 41:28

yes, the it's the Rainer Maria, real key concept of you, you live into the answers can ask all

the questions you want. But sometimes the answers can't be answered. But by living into them,

Francis Wade 41:38

as you live into the answer, you're, you're living into the principle. So. So between between methodology and the person, if the person is looking enough to understand the principle behind the methodology, then then life opens up, then the methodology because comes just a selection of actions based on a set of lifelong principles, or a set of tried and true principles. So if you're working at the principal level principles of the leadership, right, then you you're way more flexible, and you can apply or not apply as needed difficult to people get into is when, as I said, they found a methodology is without getting a chance to understand the principle or without spending the time to understand the principle. And when they don't understand the principle, that's when they run into all kinds of trouble. And that's when they try the methodology and it doesn't work. It told me to do this, it told me to use this tool that told me to buy this book. And I don't like the book, therefore, I throw up the methodology you get people into running into all these kinds of problems that he he noted,

Art Gelwicks 42:50

you know, just sitting here thinking about it, I something occurred to me that may help people get along this reflection path. And it's kind of common during something that most people do anyway, anymore. We have this habit as just generalized people. If we're into social media, of going and posting, hey, we're doing this, I, hey, I'm doing this and there are this happened to you how many people actually sit down and go back and look through what they've posted over say, a week or two weeks. And instead of posting things to like Facebook or Twitter, why not use a journal app or like to do list or like keep or Evernote or something and post little things to yourself, you know, where you have that instinct of putting something out on social media capture to yourself as to Yeah, this is what it was going right man, this part didn't work or and then going back and reflecting on those aspects using the social media endorphin trigger, that we've been trained to the lovely Pavlovian response to help ourselves rather than helping others. Yeah, I am. BELL RINGS, I post something on Facebook. And, you know, that's kind of what I still waiting for my treat. But that's what happens.

Francis Wade 44:03

That's kind of I do that on Facebook. Isn't that possible to cut? Is there a way to create the private journal on Facebook?

Art Gelwicks 44:09

You can, but I wouldn't put a private journal out on Facebook if you paid me. So yeah, I just know there's Yeah, there's no reason for it to be out in someplace where somebody's going to go sponge it for something, this is something that is personal to you. And there are tons o apps out there. Like I said, using just the basic tools, you may already be using Evernote one I'm not I don't want to advocate throwing another tool into your pile. But if you find that it's easy to have a focused application for this type of thing, then go find one. I mean, there's lots of my use one called journey that works great for that. But instead of just posting it out to social media, make that comment to yourself about that this is not working, or Hey, this was really cool. And then you can go back and reflect on your system itself through the real time observations that you're making of the system. Not a week later, two weeks later, saying, Okay, what worked last week, I don't remember because I was busy actually getting things done.

Francis Wade 45:09

Interesting, interesting thing, it actually turns Facebook into the tool for development, personal development,

Art Gelwicks 45:20

right? Well, it and and I don't want to equate it just to Facebook. But there's this concept in social media communities where you have and if it's like an internal closed community, this concept of thinking out loud, we have this basic mechanic of saying of internalizing our thoughts and only sharing them when we think they're 100% ready to be distributed amongst other people. And that's not necessarily the case in a community discussion. It's like leaning back and talking to the person next to you not fully formed ideas, but discussion and continuity around building to something greater. Well, this is the same type type of thing, have the discussion with yourself, put the content in there, go back and, you know, comment on your own things within your own tool. I know it sounds silly, and it sounds weird But once you start doing it, all the sudden you start to realize that one, it's a safe place to have that conversation and to you're starting to help that brainstorming type of approach of refining and improving the methodologies and tools you're using,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 46:21

you're bringing up a really interesting thing here which is which I didn't even think of it in this context of of stuff but I actually use if which is IFTTT. com, I use it in order to push things tha

I'm posting in other social networks to Facebook, but I haven't set up the so that Facebook only ever posts it to me. And he said it only me and that gives me the ability to see the things that you know, I might be posting on Instagram, or I might be posting on Twitter elsewhere. And that just that just kind of creates my own feed, so to speak. And it's nothing that I'm it's not private actually also use journey, which is a fantastic application. But the idea is, is that for social engagement, I'm using Facebook as my Facebook friends, the people in my life I actually know like, and trust that are that are in my, my personal space or Facebook. No, I don't. I very rarely post on Facebook. Because everything that I'm posting around the rest of the world it you know, social world is basically feeding into Facebook. And I'm using the Facebook feed as my mechanism for kind of checking out where and what I've done. So yeah, you could totally do that. And it works.

Francis Wade   47:38

You can you download it once you've got it. Yes, right.

Raymond Sidney-Smith   47:41

Yeah,

Francis Wade   47:42

yeah. Well,

Art Gelwicks   47:44

there's within the tool Slack, which is really popular within the development community, there's what's called the slack bot, which is basically its back end little bot that keeps things running. But one of the things you can do is you can talk to the boss, you can post things to the bot and it holds on to them for you. So not to go down the path of like virtual assistants and that sort, but taking an opportunity to leverage the tools we have, whether it's a digital tool, whether it's just writing notes to yourself and your notebook and in a continual journaling type of manner. But giving yourself that opportunity to have that introspection and do that navel gazing, I really think helps move this reflection and review and and system refinements to a much higher level much faster.

Francis Wade   48:29

It's hard to reflect without having some kind of stuff to reflect on. Right?

Art Gelwicks 48:34

Yeah, and we, the problem is, too, sometimes you think about it, and not, again, not to go down the journaling rabbit hole. But people think that, oh, it needs to be formalized. It needs to be fully thought out. No, send yourself text messages if that's what it takes something simple keep it short. You know that lovely Twitter hundred and 40 characters make make your captures that short. But at least you're doing it you're making notations about what's working, what's not, and go going from there. Just this little conversation we've had in the past 10 minutes, I've captured three little things in general,

Francis Wade 49:04

really, is this all in journey, the software you mentioned,

Art Gelwicks 49:09

you know, I throw stuff into journey. That way, it gets a time and date tag on it. It has location tag, it even has a weather tag. And it's just there as I'll go back and look through it. Oh, yeah, that's something I want to do. Or that's something I may think about. or that's something that maybe I should do some more research on. None of this is at the level of an action. None of it is level of a project. It's definitely not even close to fully thought out, but it's there and it's not a femoral anymore.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 49:39

Well, this has this has been a fantastic discussion, and I'm looking forward to continuing it next week as we move our way into engaging the the doing stage the how to appropriately engage with our material, and then we'll follow that discussion with a discussion about the weekly review itself. So like I said, that's a that's a big topic and we'll spend an entire episode talking about the weekly review we will get to that and we're very excited to be able to do so. So thank you, gentlemen, for this discussion. Do you have a question or comment about this episode, something we discussed in this episode or otherwise about personal productivity please visit productivity cast.net forward slash contact and let us know you can also comment on the show notes itself. There's a comment area below our episode by visiting productivitycast.net/042, which is the Episode 042. And you can you know, ask a question there and one of us will will answer there. While you're at it. please head over to iTunes or Stitcher or whatever directory us to source the podcast and give us a rating a

review it helps us grow our personal productivity community of listeners and we thank you thanks to Francis and art for joining me here on today's casts. That brings us to the close of this episode of productivity cast the weekly show about all things productivity I'm recently Smith here's your productive life Take care everybody.

Voiceover Artist 51:08

And that's it for this productivity. Cast the weekly show about all things productivity with your hosts, Ray Sidney-Smith and Augusto Pinaud with Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks.