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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 host Ray Sidney-Smith and Augusto Pinaud with Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks. Welcome back everybody to productivity cast, the weekly show about all things personal productivity, I'm recently Smith. I'm Francis Wade. And I'm Arthur Gelwicks. And we are here today to continue our episode from last week where we started talking about getting things done the art of stress free productivity. And the next step in the workflow diagram where the final step in the workflow diagram which is engaging or the former term doing, we ended the discussion last week talking about the threefold model of work and then we started into the four criteria model. So far, we covered contexts and time available and now what we're going to do is continue our conversation with me.

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And priority. And then we're going to talk about the six level model, which most people know as the horizons of focus. So let's continue on from where we were discussing last week, which is the next two steps in the four criteria model for choosing work in the moment, and that's energy and then priority, how do you all deal with energy as it really as it is a resource that we need to be productive in our systems? How do you how do you kind of manage energy in your own productivity system and or tools?

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Yeah, well, I don't, I don't organize by energy. It's not the primary criteria for me, time is the primary criteria. But if I have to choose between different kinds of activities,

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for example, how do I use a time that's between eight and 10am and how do I use it differently from a time between five and

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6pm or five and 7pm, both of them are two hour slots. But the choices that I make our own it to 10 do use energy, they not a parameter criteria, like I said, but it is an important one. So I, I prefer to do my creative kind of work between six and 10 in the morning between five and seven in the evening. I not very good at doing creative, not not heavy duty creative work, it's just too much. So I have an idea in my mind of when I'm best able to do certain kinds of tasks using a certain level of energy. I buy into the idea of bio rhythms to some degree, and I realized that each person has his or her own preferences, or your synchronicities but I think they're important. In fact, though,

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I have to agree with Francis I don't use it as my primary measure and guiding criteria.

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area for what I'm going to do and when I'm going to do it, but I do make sure I'm aware of it because I know it can be a major detrimental factor. If I don't take it, take it into consideration. There are certain points during a day that I know I am basically worthless for certain types of tasks. So I have to I have to plan around those. If I want to get the most out of any given day. Am I always successful? No, not even close. But being aware of those and taking that little bit of time to assess my energy levels and then say, Okay, this type of work works best when I'm in this type of a mindset or feel. It does help quite a bit. It reduces the friction doesn't guarantee success, but it definitely reduces the chance of failure. And for me, I am someone who, who definitely uses energy in in my world and I'm actually fairly focused different than you guys I'm fairly focused on

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on developing for myself a system where I'm aware of all of my biological necessities of being productive, and I really, I'd fall on the line of if there is a aside in that regard that you really need to focus on your ability to be biologically available, you know, fully fit to be productive before you start fiddling with tools and fiddling with with ways in which you can, quote unquote, hack your system. And so energy is one of those broad resources that I think can be maligned, if you start to think about it too much, then it becomes needle in a haystack to find the right thing to organize and categorize so I've just chosen focus that is my my ability to attend to the current state of something as my as my quote unquote energy and in my system

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I have various tags that allow me to identify how much energy something will need. I've chosen just a three part scale so that I don't get overly complicated, you know, because once you start having a five point scale of high, you know, medium, high, high medium, you then medium low and low, it just becomes way too cumbersome to to decide what the nuance is there for me. So I've just chosen three parts high, medium and low energy. And in essence, those actually only require then two tags. One is E plus for me, high energy and a minus. Basically, I could do this whenever I have low attentional abilities. And, you know, I'm not highly focused that gives me the ability to look at my my tasks and say, at any given moment, what are the things that I think I can do?

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If I'm really feeling as you know, we've heard colloquially, in the, in the GTD world, brain dead. And so some people have a brain dead context. And, you know, you fill in the staplers you're sharpening the pencils, so to speak, I use that for when I, when I really am in that state of, I just need to do a little bit of mind wandering. But I want to be doing something physical, those are typically going to be the low energy tasks. And this actually matches up with the work of Tony Schwartz and the energy project and the understanding of what's called the old trading rhythm. And so folks should really pay attention to your trading rhythm, you should know what it is basically it's a it's a, an up and down cycle that follows the the mapping of your circadian rhythm. So once you identify your general circadian rhythm, then you know that there's an up 90 minute cycle and down and down 90 minute cycle that you go through throughout the course of your day. So that other

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90 minutes is when you have high focus. And that down 90 minutes is when you have low focus. But that doesn't mean that you don't have energy to use. It's just that your mind takes time off every 90 minutes to do that kind of what we call memory consolidation. It does mind wandering, for purposes of pattern recognition. It does problem solving all of those kinds of creative thinking. and higher brain thought is happening in the background. And that's happening when you're in that quote, unquote, low 90 minute cycle of the old trading rhythm. So be very conscious of that as you make your way through the day. So anyway, I like to do things physical during that timeframe as Tony Schwartz recommends and it's really useful to me because I'm capable of recognizing that I'm I'm there and then saying okay, I can still be productive in this timeframe what are the things that I can be productive on and then I just click on that tag in my system and those those tasks surface from

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Be able to do that I don't tag the tasks per se, not not by energy. But I use Skype out to schedule my week. And I, the way I schedule my sort of standard week is definitely based on energy. So the system is flexible enough that will assign any kind of task to, or a task to a particular time block. So I have, for example,

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creative time, which occurs on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, let's say for example, between six and 9am and the system. If I tag the tasks with that particular time block, or for those four days, it'll automatically assign those tasks to those times. So I'm not having to go and sort of look for the task at the time I'm about to do some work, the system actually automatically assigns it to that time.

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If you have time to do it, and then suggest that you do this task at this time, of course, that's a big work in progress because life intrudes and as you go along, you need this knowledge of yourself. So you're not fooling yourself all the time of what you think you can do when you really can't do it. So that's been sort of humbling for me, I guess those of us that system on progress that I am way less, I have way less bandwidth. And I thought I did. That's great insight. Absolutely. And so that takes us now to the next stage of and the final criterion in the fourfold the four criteria model and that is priority and this is one of those

cases where it's such a difficult thing for people to think about I think in the in the sense that when all other things are equal then you need to to start to prioritize which which is what David

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I think it's kind of talks about as as gut reaction, what do you feel like is the right thing to do? How do you interpret that in terms of how you use prioritization and your own system. And the final criterion of the four criteria model for choosing work, and in the moment, you're the priority, I have to use a someone who is sort of very busy and time time stressed in a way is basically when it's something new. That's the number one priority. I use the due date and the I like to think of consequences of not doing something No. So if I have to choose between five different items, the the one that I will work on is the one that carries the greatest consequence for not doing it. No, and I sometimes look into the future and say, What if there's a disruption and I something that's unexpected and I can't

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Do any of the five, which one would would incur the greatest cost? So I use I use a combination of those two sort of ideas to assign priorities. I guess it's a it economists might say, it's the

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least damage that I incur from making the choice. Yeah, that's a that's a pretty common evaluation method I've seen in, in most systems where you'll go through and say, what's the biggest downside if I don't do this thing. And if it's one of those things where, you know, the world kind of falls apart if you don't do it, it sets it as a high priority and works down prioritization is probably one of the hardest things to do in this a lot of people will say, Oh, yeah, I can just make it an A or B or C. I've built systems that have massive algorithms behind them to try and figure out out of a list of 100 projects, what should be first and what should be last and usually those aren't the hard questions.

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The hard question is what's the difference between number seven and number eight and what put them in those spots? So when we think about prioritization and when I look at it with with my own system and with others, I really look at prioritization is breaking into

three categories. There's urgency, prioritization around, I have time to do something, I need to do the right thing right now

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there's external prioritization. What is somebody else think is the most important thing that I should be doing and how does that affect what I'm going to choose to do? And third factor prioritization. Is there something about the task that makes it important that it gets done not that it has impact on me, not that it is important to somebody else, but it is there's something naturally about it. So for example, is if there's a leak on a kitchen faucet that doesn't have a huge negative impact. It's

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doesn't have a direct impact on me. But ultimately, yeah, it has, there's something about it because it's a leak, it needs to be taken care of. That gives it a high priority. So I usually throw those three metrics at things just in, in mental computations to be able to help determine if, if I have two or three things that look equal, the odds are pretty good. That's enough to push one of those things up above the others. In that initial evaluation. For me, the way in which I see priority is actually through the lens of intuition. And I use the definition intuition that Dr. Gary Klein uses and the power of intuition, his book, The Power of intuition, which I'll put in the show notes, and he's also written another book called the sources of power, and you could probably read either one of those and get really a strong idea about what he means by intuition, but Dr. Klein actually researched how all kinds of people make

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decisions in the moments and he's he studied with the military he's watched, you know firefighters running into burning buildings and try to really understand what goes to their mind at the moment they decide, okay I'm standing outside of a safe building. And now I'm going to run into a burning building to save people and what what the what the thought process is for them and what he he learned a whole bunch of things through those kinds of that psychological research. But the way in which he defines intuition, then his past experiences informing your current decision making process, and that for me, is really what intuition is. And so when we talk about priority and and quote unquote, feelings, I don't necessarily think that's that's so much true. We have to we have to sometimes overcome negative feelings as it relates to turning thought into action in that particular moment when you're

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Trying to engage with your work. But if you're if you're GTD or and you're looking at your list and all things are equal, then then prioritization really is knowing what's happened in the past. What can I What do I know about the past that I can use right here in the present, to be able to make a good decision and move forward. Now relatively speaking, if all things are equal on your list at the moment, then you could close your eyes and pointed any given thing on your list. And that will be better than sitting there and staring at the ceiling saying, I don't know which item to decide. So really, you have to take some level of some stock in the in reality which is anything is better than nothing. If If you have done an effective weekly review, weekly review and the things that are on your list to do this week are are all the things that are going to move projects forward.

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So if you have all of the available resources to do those things, right, you have context time available energy available. And now those things all represent things that you can do right here and right now then close your eyes and point and start somewhere. But if you really do feel a sense that you want to be drawn to something then I say summon intuition not the Whoo hoo thoughts of gut feeling or whatever but knowing that what you what you summon as being

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a reaction to a direction on something is actually your brain doing all of the work in the background and saying hey let me surface this from unconscious to conscious a decision and you should just some great extent trust that decision and then analyze the outcomes of those things. So that over time you get in

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better with your own intuition. And that's kind of how I see it. And it's worked for me. I feel good about my ability to say every time I do something I try to do a little bit of debriefing during my weekly review every week to say when I was in that moment and all things were equal and I chose that thing to do did that move me forward in a strategic fashion? And if it was a yes great if it was a know what would have been the better thing to do and just that little bit of non judgmental but clear debriefing of the situation gives gives my brain more information and then it starts to build a better intuition and, you know, having been a GTD are now for you know, nearly 18 years you know, it's it now informs my decision

making in the moment in those situations very well. I don't I don't feel any of the anxiety or stress related with Well, what's your

Do now because I look at a list. And if all things are equal, I hone in on the thing that I know that I in the past has led me in the most strategic direction and it works for me. So I hope that that starts to build a muscle for you as you start to make your way into using that prioritization formula, which I call intuition in your own system and life. Let's see what you just outline illustrate something that we've touched on a number of different times. And that's the importance of evaluation of going back, and rehashing what you did after you did it and understanding exactly what occurred, how long it took, what was the effort, what was the energy all the factors around it in that hindsight mode, so that you're building up that knowledge base, whether it applies to your definition of intuition whether it applies to an actual algorithmic reference that you're using, it doesn't really matter it it what it boils down to is give yourself

access to that information, don't waste it. That's the experience is the most valuable, important thing you can have in making the systems work, whether it's GTD or anything else, and taking everything you do is a bit of experience that you need to leverage and take into consideration. This leads us to our next topic within the in doing or engaging step or phase of the workflow map. And in GTD we talked about the six level model for reviewing work. And this is the the six level model is colloquially known as the horizons of focus and they cover six levels, obviously, and in the original version, there was a use of kind of an airplane tarmac or you know, plane taking off kind of

metaphor where David Allen talked about being the runway, and then 10,000 foot 20,000 foot up to 50,000 feet. And so each of those six elevations as the books have gone on, and in the latest edition of the book, he has moved to a use of ground basically being on the ground floor and more of a building metaphor. So you, but I'm not sure why it's building and then horizons. So forgive the mixing of metaphors on David Allen's behalf, I suppose I shouldn't apologize on his behalf. But the point is, is that you have ground floor then you have horizon 1234 and five right. So there are six horizons and or there are five horizons but the ground floor being one of the levels and so if we talk about the ground level we're really talking about next actions and David Allen Of course defines the next

action as a physical you know, thing that you can do the physically see someone

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can do. That's what it takes action is if you can look over my shoulder and see me doing it, that's the next action. So we have the ground floor ground, which is actions, we then go up to the horizon one, which is projects, we then go to horizon two, which are areas of focus and accountability, then horizon three, which are goals and objectives, horizon for vision, and then ultimately horizon five purpose and principles. And what I'd like to do is for us to work our way from the top down, we don't really need to talk about horizons, except to say that that is the horizontal access access in GTD meaning that you do tasks, you know, and they are the things that move your world forward right there, the fundamental unit of progress, whereas once you step above actions, everything else now is the y axis in, in your, in your, you know, GTD system, and those are non actions those are actually

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All planning and review so we can kind of dissect our world in terms of that which we're doing. And that which we are reviewing and planning. And so that gives you a little bit of, you know, perspective, right. So we were talking about having control that's in kind of the action space, mostly. And then gaining perspective is as we go up the horizons of focus. So let's, let's start with macro level here, gentlemen, and what are your thoughts on a, on a macro level, about the, even the archetype, the framework that David Allen provides with the horizons of focus and accountability? I'm sorry, the horizons of focus, what are what was your initial reactions when you first read the book about this model and and what are your thoughts about how you've used it throughout time, Francis? I'd seen hierarchies like this before, and they're valuable, necessary.

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When I read the react the description of it and GTD, I didn't see anything different from what I read before. It just seemed that

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sort of restating the if not the obvious than at least what has sort of sort of been said, by many

years and years and years. I think we all we all everyone naturally thinks in hierarchies of commitment, but it's not usually structured. It's usually just ad hoc.

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And it's often not written. It's often just intuitive or just sort of a, it's a dream that you have in your mind. I think the value is in

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documenting, measuring, taking out of the realm of imagination and putting it in paper in front of you. And in that respect that I didn't see anything new.

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In what he had to say on the topic,

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I remember doing that exercise that was very early in my career. And going back to it, maybe 10 years later, sort of, I found it in my materials, you know, when you go back into some of your old files, and that was amazed that the visions or objectives, objectives I had set for myself had actually been realized to a large extent, even though I had never gone back to the original people. I found that very remarkable and a testament to the fact that when you do fix these higher level commitments, and put them on people and apply some rigor to the process, that they have a life of their own and the process works when I looked at it the first time going through the book, I think I went through the section probably three times and in that first reading, just trying to make sure I had my head wrapped around this because I noticed two things right away one to France.

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This is point this isn't new conceptual, I mean, this has been around this kind of structure has been around a long time in a lot of systems. But the other thing that struck me is it just, it seemed backwards. And the reason why I'm saying that is because if you've dealt with

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vision and mission planning within a corporate environment, everybody starts from what the equivalent of David's layout is the highest level and then works down to actionable and he's going from the ground up in the structure. Now granted, you can play in either direction, I get that

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but most people live within those, that ground horizon, one horizon to everything between

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calendar and actions to area of focus and accountability.

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Getting beyond that is where the struggle is. And the more I read through this, I realized that yeah, this is that's the cut off where people are going to trip over this. That's where people are going to read.

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have issues because they because I look at corporate groups struggle with this every day. And those This is not even things that impact their lives. So there's an analogy I use for with this when I try to explain it to people. I said that one of the things you'll see a lot illustrated with this structure is a plane and the horizons equivalent equivalent to altitude. So when you get to like horizon five, it's like the 30,000 foot level. Well, think about this in a plane, the higher you go,

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unless that plane is more and more robust, it's pressurized everything else you can't breathe, he can't think it gets harder and harder the higher up you get. And that's acceptable with this. You have to make that accommodation from the beginning. The first couple of levels you're going to get it you're going to be able to work through those because you're living those

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When you start to get beyond, I want to say horizon three, that's when the hard work begins in trying to get this system into place. So that that was my first reaction is like, yeah, this is going to be a tipping point for people. And I would agree that it it most frequently is either a stumbling block on on the way to a full system. It's also I think, kind of like your spine without it, you're just mush on the ground. But I also see a lot of people just not doing anything with the other upper horizons out of fear and that was my initial reaction when I saw it which was while a lot of people are going to avoid this and of course I came with a background of kind of a covey world you know, living in the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People the eighth habit you know, first things first and really immersed in missions.

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envision and understanding, trying trying to understand what I was going to do on those really upper horizons. And so I came with that fairly well flushed out now back then my life was very, let's say simple and, you know, as an not complex and so it was so easy for me to adopt the the horizons as they were because I was able to create lists that were for each of those horizons. And then they were already in essence mapped out for me, I knew what I was doing in each one of them. And so really, it was the next actions and projects list. So ground floor and horizon, one that needed the most work when I came to GTD, so that's you know, I I don't I don't say that it's easy, but it was easy for me because of that

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foundational work that I had done.

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If you want to think about the, the it from the perspective as art said, you know, it's kind of like, you know, you most of the time you take your, you know, kind of mission and purpose and vision levels and those are the foundation of the building, not the upper floors of it. And and so I got a I got an easy break on that one because I came to it with having done a lot of work in the prior years covering that material for myself. The one thing I want to throw in here, though, is that this should not deter people from trying this just go into it with a reasonable expectation that this is not the easy part of GTD. Absolutely, absolutely. And so what I want to do is just explore the horizons one by one let's let's start off with horizon one because really when we think about the ground floor and we're talking about

next actions and really your calendar which is a

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You know, your calendar really is a is a fundamental piece of your next action and, and ground level work. So you have your calendar. And next actions, we then step up to horizon one, which is where you really have your your projects and managing your project. So in essence, you should have a list or perhaps several lists that then managed, again, this isn't the GTD world, you would have lists that manage your projects. Now, I maintain a master projects list where all of my projects live. And because of the tool that I use, which is remember the milk I'm able to then tag those those projects and then create smaller lists based on a filter on that list. But to be able to create new lists based on that one master list. So in my system, it's very clean in the sense that I have one list and then I'm able to see okay, I just want to see all of my projects that are work related.

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Then within my work related projects, I only want to see the ones that are related to my consulting practice. And then I want to see all the ones that are related to other areas of the business, right. So I'm able to see different projects lists, although I maintain a master projects list, and that actually manages to be the same thing with my tasks. I one task list and then I use tags to be able to then, you know, reduce the task list down to just the ones that I want to see. And so how do you all manage your projects on horizon one

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horizon one, project management is is one of those things where, unfortunately, it seems to change frequently. This is where, if you're a system tinkerer, the tinkering creeps in heavy because this is where you have con bond. This is where you have planner tools. This is where you have any number of different applications out there or approaches.

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saying I want to capture this, I want to capture that I'm going to

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go back to the most basic thing. And this is what I forced myself to do all the time.

Understand,

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I have to understand what I need to do, who I need to do it for when it needs to be done, and to a lesser extent, why do I need to do it? Starting with that, that usually helps me define the core of a project, and then I can start to boil it down into the individual actions necessary to the get to the success Oh, actually, there's a, there's a fifth part to that. And that is what determines a successful completion of that project tracking it.

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I'll admit, that changes for me, sometimes it's in one note, sometimes it's on a paper and in pad sometimes it's in notions of

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I haven't found that any particular system

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or tool helps it or hurts it as well.

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I'm hitting those five points on a project definition, I can start to pull those together. Just to follow on what you're talking about. I have a clear definition between using project management tools and my project list system. My project lists my project list itself. The the master project list that I keep is purely for my internal management, my project management software, which is cello, or a sauna or whatever other tool my clients are using. I tried to

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marry to their systems so that you know, it's seamless for them. I'm trying to make it work for both of us, but you know, I really want it to be as seamless as possible for them. And so that those tools are purely for the collaborative functionality. I'm managing the

communications with them, keeping them up to date, and they're keeping me up

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To date about what's going on with the project, whereas the projects list itself is for me to know what's on my deck. What what are my active projects so that I can actually see what's going on and what's not going on for them, right? Why is there not an action anchored on my actions list for this particular project for this week, that's what that that's for. When I sit down to my weekly review, I can go one by one. And I can reference the project management software to be able to say, Oh, this is what's going on.

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And this is where we are. And there goes that document, Lincoln all of those kinds of things. But I'm not going to muddy up my system by trying to jam project management into just what should be for me a simple list of all the projects so that I have a full and complete and accurate view of my world. So I try to keep those pieces separate. And the different project management software have so many interesting bells and whistles and useful bells and whistles. But I find that having just

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complete projects list is so useful to me by itself. Yeah, I think I went through a similar progression early in my career, I would

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I would define each project and I will have it on a separate page. And my dear runner will have all the different resources and constraints and all kinds of fancy stuff. And I found a few years I guess I haven't needed that kind of detail. I just need to know us have a sense of what my major priorities project priorities are. I don't capture them in any structured way other than to think about what projects do I need to work on this week and I found that's not for me at this point. I think the the details that I used to capture way back when I I think I know have the habit of understanding what those details are without having to write them down or capsules.

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As you said, in a project management tool, or in a program, more explicit way, at a founder, and it just at this point in my career, it would just add more overhead

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not needed. I understand that. I totally understand that. I will note that at some point in my GTD practice, I chose to create a new horizon. And it is a type of project and to be quite honest, I think of, I think of horizons, 234 and five as that just simply different types of projects lists and the they just happen to fit at different

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time horizons. But in reality, they're just projects that need to be managed. And so we we give them a different context, in GTD and again, in my opinion, but in essence, I think about them as projects.

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This is something that is easily manageable in a series of lists. And one of the, one of my problems with my projects projects list was that I needed to, you know, the definition for a project, and David Allen's world over time has been something that's less than a year. And that is more than one step in order to get to completion. And so I was, I was in that mindset, right? I want to see my active projects that are moving things forward toward my goals, my vision, and ultimately my purpose and I was I was having trouble with having all of these other things sitting inside of my projects list that could also really be sitting in my areas of focus and accountability. And so I was having I was having difficulty there. And so I chose to create what in essence became my 15,000 feet level so you can call it horizon 1.5.

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And and what it what it really came to be called for me was programs and so programs for me are the 15,000 foot level is for me those things that are going to take more than one year and are potentially ongoing that is they're not ending but they're not areas of focus and accountability in the sense that for, for me areas of focus account and accountability typically center on the role that I have. So you know, being a great brother is something that is very important to me. I have a lot of siblings and I want to be a really great brother and family member, being a great spouse, being a great business owner.

Those are all roles and their responsibilities associated with them. But within that, for example, I have multiple business entities. So each one of those businesses is the program

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It's a going concern. It's something that I have agency over and it doesn't really have a clear definition of a project completion. There's no there's no, there's no complete, right? It's either I die, I sell the business or it goes out of business, right? So what where do you where do you put that? And so I created programs as that intermediary place for me to hold that that thing and again, you could call it a project easily or you can have a separate projects list for ongoing projects, but I just needed something that was a container for those and you know, now I have 40 some odd of those programs that are ongoing things productivity cast is one of those programs and it's a it's something that you know is just going to go on it's just going to keep keep spring new projects so I needed something to be able to look at that but to say project

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caster and and put that up at the horizon you know horizon to level that didn't make sense for me so I just I give that as an as a one feel free to use programs actually wrote a blog post I'll put a link to this in the show notes for Mike already over productivity is calm about this some time ago I'll link to that in the show notes but the and you can use programs if you'd like to But the idea here is that recognize that this whole system is fluid use what you need take from it what you want just like kind of Bruce Lee's g condo system of martial arts you you take from what you think is the best of something and you adopt those pieces so that you can have a complete system and that's that's what I did with programs and i and i really offer and suggest that I invite you all to to do that yourself okay so we step up to then horizon two which is which has been called many things

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areas of focus areas of roles and responsibilities, areas of focus and accountability now, and these are the, the hats you wear, how do you see horizon two? And any thoughts, suggestions, tips for people who are trying to use this material. This is a really important one in my book, because I think this is the one that opened my eyes to the amount of work I was doing. And still, I still do this now

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we have a tendency to focus on the silos of our life when we're in one of those silos. So if we're doing family stuff, we focus on focus on family stuff, if we're doing business stuff, right, so on so forth,

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being able to look at this as a horizon across the board and start to get an assessment of all of those areas that you have to deal with all of those hats that you're putting on and recognize that

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There's work attached to all of those

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one can be extremely overwhelming. I've watched people all but melt down as they start to go through this because I've done this exercise with them on whiteboards where they start to identify all the roles they have. And when they get to about like 10 rolls, they start to realize, oh my goodness, what's going on?

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It can be eye opening. And it can be intimidating at this point. But it's also probably the most important thing in my book because by identifying the roles that either you've created for yourself, someone else's created for you, you have professionally you can get a true sense

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as to what are you filling the roles you want to be filling? Where are you doing things you don't have any interest in doing anymore. And two, and this is the one that strikes most with me

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is recognizing that those roles are equal.

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If you use that hat analogy, the hats look different. They one may be a captain's hat, one maybe I farmers hat, that's my but they still go in the same head. So even though that the role may be completely different, it's still on you as an individual to be able to deal with it and interact with it, which is an empowering if you recognize then that your productivity system

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you need you have permission to tune it in define it as a way as the hat were not for the hat. You don't have to define a system for every hat of this of these roles, define it for you, so that you could apply it to all of these because the last thing you need to be doing is jumping back and forth between systems. Sometimes that's forced, sometimes you don't have a choice. If if you think about the professional hat or your corporate hat, they may have productivity systems in place that you must use and that's fine. You have to adhere to those based on their guidelines.

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But that doesn't mean you can't find a way to make it work with your own system. Yeah, that can sometimes mean a little bit of double work. But remember, at some point, you're going to take that hat off, and you're going to put on a different one. And you don't have those corporate systems anymore. To take advantage of. You have to have your own and you need to have constant trust in that system. So whether it's GTD is your core or you're using anything else doesn't matter, but this horizon level by doing this exercise and understanding those different hats and recognize them, they all go on the same head can be extremely enlightening. When you start to feel overwhelmed as to all this different stuff that's coming at you at one time we then get to the upper tier horizons and and just for time purposes, I'm going to kind of lump these together and then give some some other material that I think is useful to folks the next horizon is you know the horizon three

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This is where goals happen they are a people tend to say that they're getting those 123 year time horizons you know so basically anything above a year but within three years is

the kind of gold perspective and so we would consider them say short term goals in horizon three or the 30,000 foot level and I like to keep them again just in their own separate list and they just sit there and there are very few of them because most things are not in that space for me that's just happened to be my my thing horizon for then takes us to long term goals and we are at the 40,000 foot level at horizon for and we are looking out at the three to five year range potentially even longer than that I'm not sure but so if we then say okay, what what's really happening

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On this further out time horizon than just the, the 123 years, and this is a space where I tend to feel like there's very little control I have over that space of long term goals. So it doesn't provide a lot of value to me. But I like to know that I have those goals, they're, they're more motivational for me than they are about what I can do about them. And this is natural because the higher up on the horizons the less actionable those things are right? You know, you you are you are only able to do that which gets closer to the project and ultimately the next actions level at the ground level and then we get to horizon five which is your purpose, mission, purpose and principles space and the reality is, is that this is difficult for most people to answer the the real

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For being kind of questions and I tend to answer the questions in verticals or in in groupings I don't necessarily and and again I'll admit I have always had a a purpose in life it you know since this as early as I can remember I have felt some purpose and that's it's a very you know deep within me and I'm capable of summoning that and I know it and it's changed a few times over my life but it's always been there so I just have it I don't know how to get it

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I don't know how to help you get it other than to provide you resources like the the Franklin Covey has a really fantastic mission statement builder. I will put a link to that in the show notes. I just I don't know that everybody necessarily has those things. So my model for most people when they

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come to me and say, Well, I don't know what my mission is, is to say choose the various horizon two categories, the horizon two areas of focus and accountability. And ask the question, why are you in that? Why are you a part of this? Why are you in this role and that ends up being a little bit easier, more digestible and ultimately easier to express so for example, I gave the example of you know, I want to be a great brother right so that's my that's my standard for maintenance at horizon two and so why do I want to be a great brother is the is then the question I would answer from a mission and principles you know, purpose and principles level they're at horizon five and if I can answer each of those questions at the very top tier now I have, in essence a mission statement for as a as a raining document of what I want myself

49:00

standards to be in life. And that ultimately is very helpful for me in making it all work. David Allen wrote in 2010 or 11 now 2000 I think it was 2010 he he wrote the

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the book with a series of questions that at each horizon, you can ask yourself, and I find these to be very useful for people in just getting your bearings in terms of what each horizon represents. And so I just want to go over them very quickly. And and then you can always find he's online elsewhere. I'll actually I'll just paste a copy. I will put a copy of these questions in the show notes so you can see them in a table format. And so the questions are at the ground level, we start out with what is it and what's the desired outcome horizon one projects, is it actionable? What's the next action and does it have more than one action

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horizon to then areas of focus and accountability? What do I need to make

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attain horizon three which are short term goals, what do I want to achieve horizon for longer term goals? What would long term success look sound and feel like and then horizon five, why and or how am I or are we right? So, if you're a part of a group say you're part of your, you know, corporate world you know, why are we how are we and that gives you an opportunity to answer those questions at that horizon So I think those are very

useful like I said, I'll put a copy of those in the show notes so you can review those and and and that ultimately is the sixth level model and and the the whole horizons of focus framework as we close out this episode on doing and engaging I wanted to get some thoughts from you guys about what are some action

51:00

nuggets people can take away from this idea of engaging with your work. What are things that people can really do to engage with their systems, with their tools with their mindset as it relates to really getting into action at this at this level of their development, whether their GTD is or not, what's your one bit of advice you'd like to offer to people? In that regard? I would suggest answering the questions that you just asked.

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And if it's a bit of a once and for all

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exercise, in my opinion, that there is a as I mentioned, there was a time in my life early in my career where I was intense on answering these questions. And I believe that because I spent considerable time documenting and writing

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I don't need to do that anymore because there's, they're sort of in the shelf on the shelf behind me. I know they're there.

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I don't need to revisit them very often. But the initial exercises are really important and it shaped the rest of my life. And it's, it's why I'm here in Jamaica as opposed to living in New Jersey where I used to live, it makes that level of difference if you if you really engage in them serious as if your life depends on it. So and we're it's not something that we're necessarily taught to do.

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It's a bit of a pain in the neck to do because it requires a level of introspection and some answers may take a couple years to actually sort of manifest themselves but I think the importance of doing it at some point in your career and then having it available to you as you say, having your purpose available to you so you can summon it whenever you want. It makes you allows you not to have to worry about purpose and not have to revisit that question because you have pretty much answered it sealed up the answer unless something drastic changes your

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unlikely to go back and revisit that or revise it so it's doing it at least once so that you can be free to engage and horizon horizon is one and and maybe two for me I'll go with two two more tactical things. One, whatever system you're using as you identify a task you're going to do also identify what role you are fulfilling when you are completing that task to help you start to identify those roles

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and second, and I can't stress this enough

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stop doing tasks justice filling in a checkbox treat the task as a paragraph in your life history. Someone is going to need to read this this will be you later on to understand what you did. Why you did it how you did it.

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How it was successful or how it failed, that's going to go to that whole intuition build and historical data built. So start looking at your tasks as complete things. Complete execution. It's not just a checkbox art. If only every developer and web programmer would document as well as what you just said,

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software would never be delivered, though. That's the problem. Because it would be it

would be 20 lines of code and 300,000 lines of commented out text within the actual that would all your beautiful thing

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it would be nice and that the see the funny thing is that applies to so many other things too. And I don't want to go off on a tangent here. But

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people belittle the concept of journaling a lot. They go Oh, it's Frou Frou it's it's very touchy feely. You know what it's probably one of the most powerful things you can do for yourself because the only person who's going to really truly be on

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honest with you is you if you give yourself the opportunity to do it and that's a great way to do it. Walking around talking to yourself is typically frowned on frowned upon even though I do it a lot. But journaling, that's a great way to do it. So make capturing a journal entry about a project that you finished part of the completion requirements for the project, you know, force yourself to do it and I think you'll start to find that it really can be helpful. I would agree with that. Also, I recently made a switch from small switch, I guess from thinking about the three things I was grateful for before going to bed to actually journaling the three things I'm grateful for before going to bed. And as you may imagine, there's a big difference between thinking something in your head and actually typing it into an app or writing it on a piece of people. Very, very, very big difference.

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Yeah, there's a lot of good research out there to show that short term gratitude tracking.

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can actually have long term benefits. And you know, people who keep a gratitude journal for an extended period of time have a rate of diminishing return, but short incisive periods of it, say two weeks of gratitude journaling at a time, and then having some time between and then, you know, randomly restarting it again can actually have very, very market benefits on your overall well being. And I think that's really, really cool. And I would offer

to people again, kind of in the tactical lane that Arthur was talking about, which is to say, Take each of these horizons beyond horizon, you know, one that is above horizon one because presumably you have a next actions list and a project or series of projects, lists already identified, but in those upper horizons, creating a list for each of those and then start to capture what you want them to manage. They are a part of

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Your life management system in the GTD sense, so if they're supposed to be a part of your life management system, what are they supposed to manage? And if you start to identify those questions that, you know, as Francis said, you know, answer those questions, really answer those questions in that space. So whether you use Evernote or one note or Apple notes, or a Word document or a Google Doc, it doesn't matter. Just open up and create a document or list for each of those horizons and just start to document for yourself what you want those areas to manage. And

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ultimately, they will then start to express for you what you need, to what tools you're going to need, what systems you're going to need, right, because every system has systems within it. And so what are the systems you're going to need to manage your areas of focus and accountability, what are the what are the systems you're going to need to manage your short term and your longer term goals? What's what

58:00

The systems you're going to need to manage your purpose may just be a paragraph in a Word document as it is for me or a paragraph and Evernote and an Evernote note that you that you keep in your reference and look at a couple times a year. And you know, maybe you anchor a little reminder in your calendar or pin it up on your wall, print it and put it on your wall. But those systems those ways in which you manage those particular upper horizons start to surface once you give them attention and so you need to put a little bit more attention on those in order to develop them but then once you do then they can sign kind of rest into the background of your life and help be motivating when you need them to be and that's what they are for me there they tend to be motivational for me since I can look at them and say okay is this spring something is this helping resolve the question of why I'm working on this mundane next action right call su about you know the the

59:00

Water Tank, you know, leak. Well, that's really boring. But if I step up a couple horizons and I see that in my system, as you know, being a great landlord is is, is the standard that I have set for myself, then now I can step back and say, Okay, well, getting that leaky water tank fixed on the back of that property is important to me. And I'm going to do it right now. And that is that's the kind of motivation that I'm talking about. It helps take my my thought and potentially boredom about that particular thing on my next actions list, and it gives me that push into doing that action. So I hope that helps everybody. All right, gents. This closes out this episode of productivity cast, the weekly show about all things personal productivity, if you have a question or a comment or something that you want to express to us here on the productivity cast team please head on over to the podcast website and on

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Leave a comment on the episode itself. Or you can go to productivity cast.net forward slash contact and either record a voice based message through your browser. Or you can write like, type a message to us and we will get it and be happy to respond. If you need anything from the episode. Everything is documented, hopefully in the show notes. And so you can go over to the episode page and see the show notes on the website. You can learn how to subscribe to the podcast itself. If you're not already a subscriber. And if you are a subscriber and you've been listening for a while, please head over to iTunes or Stitcher or wherever you can rate or review our podcast and feel free to rate and review it and let us know how we're doing that helps us know that we're on the right track and it also helps bring new listeners to the podcast listening community here. I productivity cast and thank you and I want to thank Francis and art for joining me here on this episode today.

61:00

Thank you, gentlemen. And that brings us to the close of this episode of productivity. Cast, the weekly show about all things personal productivity, here's to your productive life. Thank you guys. That's it. For this productivity. Cast, the weekly show about all things productivity, with your hosts racing the Smith and a goose open out with Francis Wade and art Gail wicks.