

045-getting-things-done-gtd-weekly-review-productivitycast.m...

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SPEAKERS

Voiceover Artist, Raymond Sidney-Smith, Augusto Pinaud



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 host re Sydney Smith and a goose open out with Francis Wayne an art gallery. Welcome back, everybody to productivity cast the weekly show about all things personal productivity. I'm Raisa D. Smith and have a good job you know and welcome back to our series on getting things done these last several episodes and the next couple of episodes we are covering all of the unique aspects the the fundamental components of getting things done the the methodology based on the book, getting things done the art of stress free productivity by David Allen and I am actually holding a copy of the march 2015 edition that David Allen put out almost three years ago and today August You and I are going to be talking about the weekly review and in that copy of the book, David Allen really calls the



Raymond Sidney-Smith 01:00

Weekly Review one of the critical success factors and we're going to talk about three fundamental pieces one. Today we're going to talk about defining the weekly review in GTD terms, as well as in ways in which we really view the GTD weekly review construct today in our own systems. We're going to talk about our practice of the weekly review and

what we've changed over time, how we have implemented the weekly review in our own systems today, and then some of the challenges that we all face in the implementation of the weekly review because the weekly review is a challenge for so many people. We're going to talk about how people really make the weekly review happen. So let's start off Augusta with how do you define the weekly review and what I will. What I'll do first is I will give David Allen's definition here. And what David Allen did is in the 2015 edition, he was so kind in the appendix to provide a goal. We have terms like Glossary of getting things done terms. So he's given us some some definitions, which is actually really awesome. So under weekly review, he has the best practice. I'm quoting here from the book The best practice recommended of regrouping at an operational level once a week, bringing up the rear guard by getting clean, clear, current and creative to sustain week to week control and focus so good so how do you see the weekly review? Do you agree with that definition with David Allen in terms of it being what you do for your system and how does that approach work for you it does and I really believe on the impact of of the wiki review also I really agree with what he said that it is a fundamental part on on the success of getting things done and really anything you know, over the years working on



Augusto Pinaud 03:00

With people one of the things that I have seen with with a lot of these people is they don't have time to slow down to think to really be strategic about what is on their plate then instead of making good calls or or making decisions that will impact their goals, their objective and the direction they're taking, they tend to have a more reactive approach to life that at the end of the day, the only thing that it costs is a mess. The one way that I see the weekly review being the definition being lacking and and this is what you know, due respect but the component for me that I really use a lot in my weekly review is that I break down my reviews based on monthly, quarterly and annual component.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 04:00

So there are things that I have checklists for that end up getting placed into my weekly reviews. So if you break up your year and two quarters, you know, that's, that's 13 weeks, every 13 weeks in my weekly review is a longer review. So from week to week, I'm not muddying the waters on my in my system by having these components bleed from from week to week, they are in essence in the checklist for those weeks. So I don't want people to misinterpret the fact that just because you're working from week to week, you don't have a longer view of the of your year and the and the things that needs to be done in them. So it's not it's not really that the the the definition is lacking so much that I want to make sure people know that they can be different reviews every week when we get to talk about how we do that review. I want to revisit this topic because there is a couple of things

that I that I do that I have advise



Augusto Pinaud 05:00

people over the years couple of strategies that I think bring that variety to the weekly review on the time, energy and mindset that you put to it. So so when we get to that I would like to revisit this. This topic I want to before we move on to our own systems really cover the components of the of the of the weekly review, David Allen provides an 11 point checklist broken into three different sections. And I'm going to cover this just very briefly, for those of you who are listening and have never heard about the weekly review before. This will give you a good idea. And then I'm going to turn the mic over to Augusta to talk about how his practice of the weekly review is today versus from when he started and some of the things that both of us have modified over time. So David Allen, like I said, has it broken up into getting clear getting current and getting creative and under



Raymond Sidney-Smith 06:00

Get clear, he calls us an initial stage where you collect all of your paperwork, you know, things that are lying around in paper, but also in digital and getting them into your in-tray or inbox where you can then zero them out. So you have collecting newspapers and materials, getting your inbox to empty and then emptying your head. In essence, you're doing a mini mind sweep so that you can get all those ideas about any new projects, action items waiting for us, and so on so forth. They're captured and clarified. Then we get into the get current stage where again, he talks about bringing up the rear guard and this is where you review your lists. And so as I was saying earlier, and my definition of the weekly review, I include the longer reviews because on those quarter months, quarters and then annual reviews, I'm doing those reviews as a part of my weekly review, but he says review your next actions lists review previous calendar in this case two to three weeks of calendars. In the past to see if that brings up anything that you need to do for the future reviewing your upcoming calendar. So he says look to the long and short term calendar entries to see if there aren't things that you need to do for upcoming events. You know preparing for meetings are preparing for upcoming travel and meetings and so on. So forth review you're waiting for list so if you're waiting for things from someone, you can go ahead and capture those actions to follow up with those people you have reviewed projects and larger outcome lists that means evaluate evaluate the status and quoting here evaluate the status of projects goals and outcomes one by one ensuring that at least one kickstart action for each is in your system and quote then he says review any relevant checklists and this is where my longer term checklists would probably fit in so you review any checklist you that you need to get your various engagements interests and

responsibilities as he says done then he gets to get creative and get creative is a review of your someday maybe list And then he calls this the be creative and courageous portion where a quote Are there any new wonderful harebrained creative, thought provoking risk taking ideas you can capture and add into your system or external brain and quote and so this is his opportunity for you to be creative but you know I find and gusto you probably agree with me here, you know, I find that the Get creative portion of my weekly review really happens in the mind sweet portion. And really throughout the rest of my weekly review, I don't spend a lot of time in that be creative and courageous portion because by virtue of reducing my stress by knowing that I'm reflecting and planning out my next current week I'm able to have the the headspace and the creative space to be able to make the those ideas surface so I don't necessarily spend a lot of time in the creative and courageous period I agree with you on the other thing that happened to

A

Augusto Pinaud 09:00

Me is for for many years, I have been using what I call the extraordinary hour on a time between half an hour and an hour depending how crazy my schedule as I'm gets where I basically said to do exactly that, but it's not necessarily on the weekend review it happened at least every Thursday first thing in the morning where I blog that half an hour to an hour depending again how crazy that week is where I basically said with a blank piece of paper and crayons, okay, different colors and sometimes I doodle for an hour. Sometimes I solve issues. Sometimes nothing happened and I'm okay with the three options. But over the years, week by week by week of that extraordinary hour. That is what I call it has been incredible for me not only to solve problem but to find solutions to get ideas. To move projects forward and other things that it's simply a time where I'm basically allowing myself to sip coffee for half an hour at least and have a clean page I'm Hey, sometimes again is just doodling of different colors is completely fine. I couldn't agree more in terms of making the weekly review. And in your case, the extraordinary our something that matches your ability to plan out the things you need for the upcoming week or weeks ahead of you. And whatever helps you reflect and plan is what you should do. You should really spend that time and there's obviously a rate of diminishing return if you do too much. But I think it's I think it's important for people to recognize that the issue of efficiency is not necessarily as important as the issue of effectiveness when it comes to review reflecting and planning that is the other thing that I have discovered with this and it was a way to review that over the years I have seen as a common issue for people People one Don plan their weekly review second the weekly review move with their schedule and I believe as the extraordinary our require a time that we can review require a time for many many many years my weekly review was Friday first him in the morning now because life has changed to Saturday first thing in the morning but inside of the first thing in the morning every Saturday no matter what same thing was extraordinary our

because what people do that do not have yet that have it done understand is when you do that your brain also gets trained to be a lot more effective into getting into the needed mood to do that weekly review. It's a to begin with a struggle to really get into the mindset for the weekly review. But the more consistent you do it on the same day and around the same time the fastest your brain gets into the place it needs to be to really have



Raymond Sidney-Smith 12:00

on effective wiki review, you said that your weekly review time had changed. And we'll talk about time and place and a little bit. I want to I want to talk first about how you practice your weekly review review today and how that's changed over time. And what you what you do more specifically as it relates to the to the weekly review as it as it was sort of promulgated by David Allen in in 2001. I was I you know, we frequently joke about the fact that we've been doing the weekly review for quite a long time, I won't, I won't I won't put you on the spot. But I'll say that since since 2001. I mean, it's been it's been almost 20 years now, of having practice GTD and I've been doing the weekly review ever since and it's provided such value there obviously I've been changes over time I have again I'd made on another on other episodes and other shows that he's been the last couple of months I don't know what you're talking about.



Augusto Pinaud 12:56

But that said, I guess when I begin doing the weekly review I used to work with that she David Allen used to sell or David own company I don't know if they still do I laminated sheets were had that and it was really really nice and and that's what I used to use the beginning now I over the years dot has evolved and my check current checklist contains six parts so first is preparation preparation for me it's getting ready and get into the into that mode the second part is getting into the right mindset then the third part is get the big rock first second or fourth part is the cleaning then the part five is now go into the system and the Part Six is fine or check those relevant checklist as you were saying that change you know through the year or through the quarter or even through the through the month and I would like to get more into detail. We go on progress into this one into what those things and why it follow that is correct path of things and why over time of doing those that path consistently I have been able to accomplish core to get to some of the places I have been able to get with this yeah so let's go into a little bit more about what you're talking here you have you have the six fundamental areas it is it is so nice and I will never deny that they influence the positive and massive influence that this component of their getting things done has had on on what I do so so the preparation is to me to be a star to get ready or to be ready to go on jump into the mindset and for me

include some breathing exercise includes getting into mood and that's usually Beethoven nine with loud speakers or headphones dependent if it Help people sleeping around me and then it's water and coffee for years I don't know when but now since you're going to make me at mid year so at least more than 10 okay



Raymond Sidney-Smith 15:13

I you can say months you are more than 10 months I have half a mocha coffee for my weekly review



Augusto Pinaud 15:22

you know when when I was doing on Fridays and I was heavy traveling used to be a Starbucks and I just get a venti bulk and it started with that now depending where I am I just make sure that I have a venti mocha coffee for me for the weekly review and water so after I have that then I do what is or what I call to get into the mindset and basically get into the mindset I have a set of quote unquote rules and and checklist of things I don't want to do one of them and we have talked about this one is that I do not do list okay and I do not have list and there is a rules of standard standards that I want to maintain. So I after I set up on begin the music and all that, that's where I go next why because that is going to allow me to set the standard on which I want to review everything in my in my world okay after that then I go to what I call the big rocks so I evaluate the week before Okay, what could have helped if I will have done it differently Do I need to remember it's tough I checked yesterday today and the next 15 days in the calendar okay and after that I make sure before I go into anything else that I have in the calendar for at least the next week. Usually the next couple for things time to recharge that's the first thing I check why because most people Put work family events and everything but never put the time to recharge first time to recharge need to be blocked first second time to read and think why when a party because I recharge that way. But it's second because otherwise I will never read and I will never have time to think. And I earned my living doing both. So it is really important third ice time to write. And finally the time the extra time that he's left is for managing my businesses. why I do it that way. Most people do it on the opposite way. They searched the business then they church what is important to them and then they hope that they're going to have free time. And what that produce without any doubt is an invention burn out because you never protect the time you need to recharge the time you need to feed what is important for you. So years ago I I discover that if I flip that equation and first protect that time I can work not only more but more effectively in a more consistent way so because of that I organized it that way the next step I do now is the cleaning but as you can see I'm already deep into the weekly review by the time I get to

cleaning I advise to people if you have not the time to clean daily then try to clean at least do a heavy clean the night before to do the weekly review so that way you know this cleaning part doesn't take an hour because you only have so much brain power on does you know and after an hour and a half two hours just start diminishing that brainpower and weekly review started being effective so I go into my inbox Clean how many focus I clean I processed by notebook, okay? And check that there is nothing else sometimes, hey, there is a slips on my backpack or or my bag or there is some stuff on my wallet. I tried to process all that, okay. And then I go to the park five. That is I go project by project and figuring out what I needed to do. And then when I look at the actions and the projects, I look at those on tree perspective, what are what I call my impact projects. So things that are getting me closer to the things that are goals unimportant for me, the daily projects, hey, I need to feed the dog every day. Otherwise, we'll create problems for me, okay, I need to buy groceries. I need to do a bunch of stuff that happened on a daily life and they need to happen, you need to have them and then I have what I call the maintenance projects. Okay. For example, check the books of the company. enter this stuff into Quicken. That is not impact it's not making money for me but he needs to be done. So you need to have it somewhere. I don't like to mix them okay so are they go into what I call the maintenance pocket is the stuff that needs to happen but it's not a priority to help okay? And finally I go to check those checklists okay on this part five I do it in two ways or weeks Okay, I go projects to aid to see an even weeks I do it the opposite way. I go see to a The reason for that is as I was saying before, you only have so much brain power. So what happened when you start on the A? As you get approaching to the see your brain is tired and you start making worse decisions or say that project is fine. Okay, everybody who do it Weekly Review do that. So when you go even on one direction odds on the other direction, what happened is you guarantee that at least every other week you review every project with high level of brain so you get to move things in a much more effective way. And then the Part Six or where does Hey is this spring checklist? I have a full checklist. I have a summer checklist. Okay, I have an also a monthly checklist so if it's the middle of the month, I may not check it but I have that July, August September because there are things that need to happen okay, you know, when the so so I want to make sure all the things are in track. It takes me seconds to check them but it saved me a lot and that basically what my weekly review is, as I said, I don't go into the Get creative that they getting things done original list do not because I don't think is important but because I get that piece or components separate on his own time usually storage the morning where I go open up piece of paper on Play thanks for going through that that detailed overview of your weekly review I'm going to I'm going to give a comparison in terms of how I do my weekly review and just point out some of the things that I do differently and some of the things that I do the same for listeners, I think this will be really helpful for you. So with my weekly review, I do hold pretty closely to the organization that David Allen has given but I have changed the weekly review checklist so that they are identifying explicitly the things

that I need to check. So for example, I've itemized all of my inbox is so that when I go through and clear I'm actually reading the chat



Raymond Sidney-Smith 23:00

checklist that says go to personal email. And then the email address so that I have all of the email address in boxes itemized, and all the calendars itemized, and all of the various places where I could have random things that I want to make sure that I don't forget to look for. So this has been really helpful for me to be able to know exactly where it is that I need to have my mind focused on. So that the checklist is longer because I'm I'm very clearly itemizing where I need to go for things but it's very, very helpful because it reduces my overhead I don't have to think which inbox is do I have to look and and, you know, and and process for example, I don't consider my Twitter direct messages, my dm inbox an inbox that needs to be processed. So I've chosen which inbox is our quote unquote official in boxes of Raymond and the rest are not looked at and So make a decision and get rid of the other in boxes that are not ones that you're going to process. Are you going to process your Facebook messages? Are you going to process your text messages inbox? Are you going to are you only going to focus on specific ones and I've chosen to limit myself to those so that I can have very clear focus. And that means maybe forwarding some text messages or forwarding some screen captures of conversations on Facebook or on Twitter into my inbox so that I'm able to then process it from one or as few places as possible. The other is that I have as as we said already in August and I share this I don't really do the creative thing very well and my someday maybe is probably much bigger than most people because I focus on just the next week and sometimes two weeks if I'm if I'm really trying to plan out something that's going to flow two weeks pretty closely anti I want to pay attention to how that's working then I'm I'm planning out the the tasks and the actions for the upcoming week I'm not going much more beyond that because in reality I don't have very much control over that so I really liked the idea of reducing my stress but not by not having to worry about things that are happening four and five and six weeks away and I think that just said something that is important and tied up with what I was trying to explain before that you have during the time of the weekly review a limited amount of mental power our mental capacity and having detail of checklist what allows you to do I guess is to do not waste mental cycles into okay which email address or which in books or which any of those because you now have a really good detail of which ones they are so that way you can just



Augusto Pinaud 26:00

follow a step by step instead of thinking, what is the next one? Yeah, it's all about reducing for me the overhead necessary to get into my weekly review. And so I follow the checklist

pretty closely. Other than that, besides the fact that, like I said, my system is designed around just the next week or two. And so my everything else gets pretty much put on to something akin to a someday maybe it's just that it doesn't show up on an in my system in that way when one unique thing about my system it are the checklists because I have checklists for every month quarter and then on the annum I have I have a series of checklists where I've created those tasks. So for example, if there is a fall in the Indian and they're the end of the fall during that weekly review. I will copy all of the fall checklist items into my system and there



Raymond Sidney-Smith 27:00

Things like call the gutter cleaners call the people who have to come around and do the winterizing of the property. So that so that the house and everything else is is prepared for the winter. I have those already created, I'm going to do them every year. And they're usually just a series of easy, quick phone calls. They're not things that I can necessarily automate, because I have to call and discuss, and so on, so forth. So this allows me to be able to very quickly get those things into the system. And otherwise, they're they're limited from my view, because they sit inside of the checklist list. And they are accepted from all of my saved searches. So I've I've chosen to tag them all. And then in my system, whenever I do a Save search, or in general, they're going to be removed from view because they're they're filtered out so you're able to do that in some of your systems. So really think about that. I like the idea of being able to have a checklist where I'm I'm going to just, you know, duplicate the items, throw it into the system and then very quickly identify you know, where are they where do they go Are they calls are the emails and what needs to happen or if I need to go do it myself do I need to go to the hardware store and pick up some something in order to make that happen so those things really make my quarterly movement between the seasons almost seamless and so if you if you have to keep up your home I'm presuming everybody has to do some home upkeep. This gives you the chance for spring cleaning, and for fall cleaning with with much more a plum and confidence than you would otherwise. So at this point, I just I wanted to switch into kind of the challenges and maybe some of the advanced strategies for being able to effectively do weekly reviews. I know that for me, with the GTD, DC, and GTD, NYC meetups. I meet people every month who tell me that they struggle to do the weekly review and while I understand why they struggle. It's seemingly overwhelming. I have myself been able to consistently do it for so many years because I understand its value to me. I see it I see its value in my own ability to get things done. So let's talk about some of the challenges people face. And I think one of the first things that we touched on a little bit earlier was finding the time mental headspace and physical space to do a weekly review. So do you do their weekly review in the same place every week? And you talked

about having, you know, your cafe mocha and your Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and you know, getting yourself in the right sensory experience. And I think that I'll touch on this a little bit more but because I think it's really important but what do you do to make sure that you sit down to weekly review at the same time and place every week? It is it is not necessarily on the same place 10 months ago.



Augusto Pinaud 30:00

Continue the joke. When I started doing getting things done, I was traveling significantly God that time I was traveling around 250,000 miles a year. Okay, so there was really not a place. I never knew where I was going to be Friday morning. I knew my calendar was blocked Friday morning to do with your review. So it happened in a Starbucks on an airport on a hotel somewhere. So from the beginning for me, the weekly review had never had a physical space tied up to it. That's the reason I do the same music. That's the reason I do the headsets. That's the reason I do the same coffee. Okay, because those two elements allow me to bring the brain to all we're going to be thinking and processing. So that's that's what it's been for me. What it has been for me is to time it's just really the first thing I do. Do fry was Friday Friday smell that is Saturdays is the first thing I do side of this. Actually, I have two relatively small kids. So I wake up early on Saturdays, same time I, I wake up during the week. So that way they are for sure not up. So by the time they get up, I may be in the last string of the weekly review or I will be done by that. But I tried to take that time to be super consistent and the same one because what allows me is to get the to get the brain into the space that need to be much much faster. I think you make some really key points here in terms of getting to the weekly review and I I liken this to the idea of going to the gym or exercising in some way, shape or form. Many people have talked about the idea that you you set up your gym clothes, maybe you go to sleep at your gym clothes and you have your running shoes next.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 32:00

To your bed that reduces the friction that might block you from continuing toward the process of going for your runner or heading out the door and going to the gym. You need to reduce those barriers and also set up a as many senses to experience the week review. So that you are you are triggered by all of those various sensors. And again, we have we have five common senses. We have more senses than that by some scientists standards. But by and large, we have the five senses are given to us. And we need to have all of them queued up that the weekly review is ready to start. And so yeah, similar to you with gusto. You know, I have a particular flavor of yogurt and I have a particular drink and I sit down typically with the same equipment in the same space and try to do my weekly review on Friday mornings. And the reason I do mine early Friday mornings are because I don't know

why this is but I get fairly stressed out I finished my weekly review and I've not had a chance to get a jumpstart on things. So very similar to my annual review, I close out my annual I close out my year on October 31 so that I can get a jump on the next year. And maybe it's just because of school. You know, during the summer break, I would want to read all the textbooks and various upcoming readings for the upcoming year because I want it to be prepared. I think the same thing for me as well with the weekly review as well as with my annual review and annual reflecting and planning process. So I want Friday morning to be the place where I reflect on the past week, you know, pass at that point from Saturday to to Thursday. And then to be able to have Friday to as David Allen says, Bring up the rear guard anything that may not have been as ideal during the first four days of the work week I'm now able to catch up and make some of those final tying the loose ends on Friday itself. And that way I can go into the weekend with pretty clear understanding of what's been done. And that next week I'll be coming into the office with things already in motion. So I really like doing that. I know as a recent part of the return my weekly review was on Friday usually as anybody who travels for work Friday is today to try to go back home so what used to happen is Friday morning was great, usually have meetings but then by noon or two I was catching a plane but then having the weekend review at that time allow me to send a significant amount of emails follow up so that way when I land whenever I was going to get home, I could have some of those things moving forward or at least follow up now that I don't travel is not as relevant as it used to be. It may be also how things are change work wise for me, but there are not as relevant so there is not really a



Augusto Pinaud 35:00

Significant gain for me between Friday and Saturday. And then what I have been able to do is I can spend more time on Saturday that I was able to spend on Friday so has allowed me to get the weekly review to enjoy the weekly review a lot more than than what it used to be. I think it's also important that we recognize that our brains are designed to to remember things based on physical location. And it's like our hunter gatherer ancestors. They knew where their camp site was, they knew where their cave was, they knew where their shelter was built and needed to be able to go back to those places. And as a remnant of that we are very much designed around our territory. And so things get done in the spaces that we recognize and so the the



Raymond Sidney-Smith 36:00

ability for you to manifest that you're in a particular place is context for you being able to gear up the appropriate things to be done. So if you're going out on the hunt as a hunter

gatherer, by virtue of you going out there, and you having your spear, or whatever you've built as your weapon, you go out there, into the prairies, the prairies, you know, the the forest or wherever you are, is indicator that you're going to go into hunting mode, your tools and utensils are telling you that you're in hunting mode because you're holding them the same thing with your weekly review. You need to be able to set up your environment to trigger yourself as best as possible that you're going into that that modality and the better you can do that. And the faster you can do that with as little friction as possible, the more likely you are to to set the stage to make that happen. And that is code that is completely correct. And that's what



Augusto Pinaud 36:54

we were saying at the beginning. Most people who don't have Review it's a really hard habit to acquire the people who had acquired them swear by them okay everybody I know who had seen the benefit long term of the weekly review do a quick review and keep doing the with the review everything else may fail but a weekly review happen and as a person who just recently and really recently start looking into exercise as a habit I never thought about that the similarity between the weekly review on on going to the gym or doing some exercise okay it is it is the same for that when when I begin at the beginning of this year you know taking serious that exercise in the name of energy and start looking I was going to do this Now, you know, every day what I didn't know it was really hard for me to get into the habit now that he's an ingrained part of my day, okay, it's exactly the opposite the days that I can do that exercise first thing in the morning for whatever reason, okay? Our days that my day tend to struggle and tend to be more challenging than the days I can get the exercise first thing in the morning because that's the time I have trained. My body that we do this exercise with the wicker review happened and what happened is really similar when you are you get into the habit of do that. Then once a week and you skip the week what happened is, you feel it and that's exactly what makes you go back you're not soon as possible to see there and do it because you start getting that discussed factor into your I don't know where things is there are some ass I don't and you start getting that uncomfortable feeling same as you feel when you have been doing the exercise in a certain way and you cannot do it one morning and so there are a couple of the other things that I think people tend to be challenged by and I want to just throw these out there for those of you who are listening and may feel challenged by the weekly review in some way, shape or form. One is the length of time that the weekly review can take to be completed. And just to kind of touched on this a little bit, which is that you should always be clarifying as you are. If you're capturing all of your open loops in life. You can't just wait until the weekly review and then sit down and say, Okay, now I'm going to clarify all those items and be prepared for next week. In reality, you really really need to be clarifying as you as you go along.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 40:00

I actually make a rule for most of my my clients to say that if you have a number of open loops on a number of items that you capture on a regular basis, you should take the the modal average, that is adding them all up and dividing them by the number of them that you're seeing. And over the course of several weeks, you should get a pretty good average of the of the number that you're capturing. And then tracking for some period of time how long it takes to process those items. And so then you get another average which is ok, it generally takes me about an hour every day to process all of the items that come into my inbox. Well if it takes two hours and it takes three hours I don't particularly that's that's not an issue for me to judge it's just a fact of life so you then need to dedicate that amount of time every week so that you can make sure that you're capturing and clarifying so that going into your weekly review there are some minor loose ends a few I items you need to clean up here and there but you should not be going into your weekly review with all of those things sitting in your inbox. Now I say that with full understanding that when I started my my getting things done practice back in 2001, there is no question that my weekly reviews took six and seven hours because that's what I thought I thought I would just capture everything all along throughout the week. If there was anything wasn't anything specific that needed to be done at a at a at a date and time before the weekly review. And I would just wait until the weekly review and then clarify all those things at that time. It's ultimately very inefficient and will cause you a great deal of stress and you will, you will respond by being repelled by the weekly review. So always be processing always be clarifying. And that is an important thing. When I describe my process. I say there are moments I get it. Okay. You are so busy that the fact that you're capturing should consider a winner.



Augusto Pinaud 42:00

That is a win. Okay. And that is a moment where you should then go to that Friday night or the day before in my case is Friday night and then go find open a bottle of wine tonight to get to inbox zero. That way when you get to do the weekly review on Thursday, what you have to process and clean up is minimal. Okay and then you can go and really think for for I got lucky on the sense that my bad habits of processing came later and not have the beginning at the beginning. You know, when the beginning for me I was into this type of the inbox zero. So I was pressing one data input volume because of work on life and everything is start getting more than the time I had to process was where I begin finding that problem that I could not spend time Friday morning where I have maybe an hour maybe two tops Okay, three hours processing. So my weekly review I noticed start suffering that's when I said okay I need to find a better solution and the solution was denied the For I will get as much processing as possible. And that's what I have coach my

customers, you need to go as clean as possible when you begin because if you need to do as you said, three hours of cleaning, you don't have brainpower to the two hour and a half or two hours says require a good wiki review. Okay. The other part is the cleaner you get, the more chance you have to reduce that hour and a half to one hour, 45 minutes. That's the other element that most people don't see, again, did the second as we were discussing that time, that variability on the type I do the wicked review one day, one week on Wednesday, when we come to say, one week on Monday, try to get it as consistent as humanly possible because that make a difference. A significant difference for people and one of the things I have seen over the years that is one of the largest obstacles is people is afraid of The amount of projects they have, therefore, oh, if I don't do weekly review, I don't know how much stuff I have. Well, that's a great theory except it doesn't work. Your brain knows how much stuff you have. Not only that, if you are not paying attention to that, all that stuff, go back to the brain and you need to recollect it. Okay? And he's going to come again and he's going to come and bother you again. Because if you don't trust that the system has the information it's going to come back to the brain. One of the reasons people don't do good with reviews is that they do not trust the system and they do not trust the system because they don't come to the wicker review enough. They think that because they are going to spend 45 minutes once a week that's it and when that's it When you are on a non stressful week that's it but I when you are on a crazy overwhelm week, June need to get into that weekly review after and I have recommend people and I have done this when things get crazy you need to do a mini version of the weekly review every day and sometimes twice a day. Okay, why? Because you are on a crisis. It's not overwhelming. You can call it a crisis, okay? And you need to make sure that the next action you make is critical. I was coaching a customer or a client last year was January or this year January of this year okay and this person came into one of those crisis week okay. He was overwhelmed with the stuff amount of stuff he needed to do and the deadlines and all that He was into a lot of his trials so came to our call on heat the call begin saying I only instead of the time we normally have I can only spend 15 minutes with you that's fine you you do we keep the time as billable time as it is but I can only spend 15 minutes with you I'm so busy as we started discussing I asked him okay fine what you have done today that will make an impact to that and his answer was I took the Christmas light out of the border of the house okay and as soon as he said that loudly he has started laughing I love okay because there was zero importance or priority or anything that will have affect his world to take dude he to take in the Christmas light out of the border of the house was on this next section list. Yes, it was duty was relevant or it will have make an impact. To the situation he had right now in his life, no, it will not. But if when you get to those moments you don't pay attention, one of those actions will impact your situation on will not impact the situation, you will tend to make the poor choices. Why? Because they are easier to make at the time. It is the same thing with the weekly review the weekly review, what it gives you is those tools to be able to see what produced

that impact and what doesn't. But if you skip it, the probability that you are going to pick the ones that do that do not produce impact is really, really high. And just as you are talking about the fact that if things get so busy that you feel that your time to do the weekly review is restricted. The inverse is actually true, it's counterintuitive, but you should be spending more time actually preparing for



Raymond Sidney-Smith 48:00

The next strategic step, a lot of people also say to me that they don't have enough time in one chunk to do the weekly review in one one time period. And so again, that goes back to my general rule, which is that break it into as many parts as you need to. Again, as long as you're doing all of the parts of the weekly review, you actually don't need to do them all at the same time. So for example, you might take the weekly review checklist and break it into daily chunks. So the 11 checklist item can be broken up into, say, seven days. And every morning you do a little bit of each of those things. So you get your newspaper and materials collected together and then you process your inbox to zero. Then the next day, you go ahead and do a mind sweep. And then on Wednesday, you go ahead and review your next actions list. And then on the next day, you preview your calendar data and your future calendar data and see if any actions spring up from that. Then on the following day, you can look at your waiting room waiting for list and on the following day you can do a project by project review and so on and so forth right you can break down the weekly review so that you're doing in essence a daily review of a component of the weekly reviews so that every seven to 10 days you are now having done the bringing up the rear guard as David Allen talks about here so don't feel that you have to do the weekly review all at one time maybe you do the get clear on one day get current on one day and get creative on the other day so you break it up into three days and so therefore it's a little less overwhelming and much more likely that you're going to do it but the caveat to what you just described is then it need to keep that consistent so you always are going to do now every Tuesday they collect the papers every Wednesday the other part every Theresa that excellent every Friday the next one because as soon as you start adding viability to that you start losing.



Augusto Pinaud 50:00

Power of that. And I think I think this comes down to work style. Also, some people actually thrive on variability and to some to some extent so that you might decide that for three months, you're going to do it Monday, Wednesday, Friday and do it consistently on that Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and then three months later, you're going to do it some other way differently. I don't I don't mind that. As long as it's, as you said, gusto consistent in some way, shape or form such that it isn't constant change because the constant

change is actually going to reduce your ability to actually do it consistently. And I agree with you there as we close out this episode, or do you have any final thoughts on the weekly review and the value of the weekly review that it has brought to your productivity system over the years of Cousteau as I said is one of the things out of the the original Return of the book that covering an invaluable effect for my it allows me to go special On Chris on when it good for Gracie allows me to get back to center to make sure that the next actions are making are the next actions that need to be made. Make sure that they the things are not falling into the crack that even when things get crazy and doesn't matter if you do the weekly review, they will get crazy. You have the ability to take back for a moment and think for a moment and reflect on for a moment and make sure that you continue moving forward that the actions you are taking tend to produce more impact than not well said. I think that we can all take to heart the fact that that a review done consistently is going to be an opportunity for you to be able to best take advantage of your near term future and I think so many people forget the fact that humans are not



Raymond Sidney-Smith 52:00

Planning creatures by some divine ability we are, what's the latest and loudest? What's going what's right in front of us? What's the thing that's going to eat us? What's the thing that we're going to eat, and we pounce on that thing. We need to be able to take a step back though to look to our future self and see what we can do to benefit our future self. And the weekly review is really that time for me when I'm able to give some benefit to my future self by doing that reflecting and that planning and the action plans necessary to make make my near term future a happier me. So I really I really appreciate the weekly review and its ability to help me do that. Also for those who are looking for some assistance with their weekly review. I as I said, I'm the organizer and facilitator of the GTD meetups in both Washington DC and New York City and as a part of that we have created something called the week Weekly Review accountability party or rap you wrap up your week and so every Friday at 10:30am eastern time we meet via video meeting and we do our weekly reviews together so the idea is to be accountable to doing the weekly review on screen we have everyone muted and you get to doing your weekly review and you just have that level of accountability to doing that so if you're interested in joining us go ahead over to [www dot personal productivity dot club](http://www.dot.personal.productivity.club) again [www dot personal productivity club](http://www.dot.personal.productivity.club). Go ahead and join and you'll see the weekly meeting available there on the homepage. And so you can join us so hopefully that will help some folks who are struggling to show up to do the weekly review and power through it by having the support of a community who's also doing the weekly review in real time with you and with that Do you have a question or comment about this cast about the weekly review or something we discussed. Generally, if you're listening from your favorite podcast app, we invite you to

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