057 Productivity Potpourri Premiere Edition.mp3

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SPEAKERS

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

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V **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 Ray Sydney Smith and a goose open out with Francis Wayne and our gal wicks.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 00:17

Welcome back everybody to productivity cast, the weekly show about all things personal productivity, I'm recently Smith

A **Augusto Pinaud** 00:23

and I'm I was hoping that

Raymond Sidney-Smith 00:24

Francis Wade, and I'm Arthur go wicks, and welcome everyone who's listening to productivity cast to this week's episode, what we're going to do this week is a little

unusual, unique, it'll be something that we may try to do in the future. If this works out to be a good format, what we're going to do is we're going to take four independent topics that each of us has come up with, and we are going to ask it of the other productivity cast team members. So we're all going to go round robin and kind of answer and discuss these many topics that I think will be quite interesting. And and hopefully we get into a place where we realize, wow, this could be its own episode by itself. So let's see what happens we'll take a little bit of time for each of us to ask the question and then go from there. So let's let's start off at the top alphabetically. Art,

A   **Art Gelwicks**   01:15
one of the things that we always have to try to do is get people over that initial hump of starting to be productive. So the question I have for the three of you is, if you had to give one piece of advice to someone who was looking to get started on being productive, what would it be and why,

A   **Augusto Pinaud**   01:32
if I get somebody who approached me was technique dependent, the person I will say is one or the other. If you have a person who has at least a basic basic understanding of productivity, then I will tell them to start writing down daily their goals. If you have a person who is before that point, then I tell these people, this person to start collecting and start writing things down. Because I think if you don't have anything, the first thing you need to do is to get into the important habit of collecting of Don't let things scape to take things out of your mind on your brain. So that way you can go later into other steps.

F   **Francis Wade**   02:11
One piece of advice I'd give them is is is actually to capture something from their past, it comes from the idea that they already have 90% of what they need. And they're already doing most things productively, I'm assuming that we're talking to an adult who has a full life kids job, mortgage, you know, the average adult, the average functional adult. And what I tell them is that they're not new to productivity, that they've been trying to be productive since they were about 10 or 11 years old. And they've been building habits and practices and doing different things in order to become more productive. And I maybe take them back to their history and say, when did you? When did you realize that you needed to be productive, where you needed to be effective, and had them go back to some story about what happened when they were 11 years old, and something fell through the cracks, and it was a disaster. And so I'd want them to recap show what the great they've taken. And the reason I do that I do that is to get them present to the idea that

they are already a builder of productivity systems, and one they have no probably just hasn't grown up to meet the needs that they have today. So I want to get that sort of skill in their awareness and then ask some questions or on what's the nature of their system today, from the point of view of the unwanted symptoms they're experiencing? So I'd ask them, What what are the things that you want to get rid of that aren't working so I would stop bad actually start with questions,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 03:36

in terms of the first piece of advice I give to most people who are interested in becoming more productive is to learn their tools fully, I can't impress upon people enough the importance of understanding the tools that they're already using it unfortunately, people tell me that they need a tool in order to be more productive. And most often than not, they're already using tools. So the very basic is most people know their way around Microsoft Word or some kind of text editor word processor. And lo and behold, you can keep a checklist in there. Honestly, you could keep your agenda, you know, calendar in a single word document and be fine. If you fully understand how Microsoft Word works, you'd recognize its power, and that you probably could create an entire productivity system in there, do you want to ultimately, maybe not. But the idea is, is that if you don't know your tools fully, then you don't know where they were, they fail you. And ultimately, that means that you are not going to be as productive as you can be. And you'll keep chasing the dream of an ideal tool, and nothing like that exists, there is no ideal tool out there, there's always going to be a tool that works 80 to 90, maybe you can give it even get it to 95% of your ideal, but that's not what makes you a skilled worker, what makes you skilled as a worker is being able to get the job done. And if you're good at it, then it doesn't matter what tool you're using. But it really does matter that you know, the tools, you know, so I guess it goes back to that, you know, if you give a broken hammer and a broken chisel to a skilled skilled sculptor, they'll still be able to you know on earth the the Donatello from the marble, and that's just the reality of it, you know, you you doesn't it doesn't matter what the tool is, it really matters the skill of the of the person who's using it. So learn those skills aren't now that we have all answered your question. What's your own? What do you have any questions for us based on our answers? And what's your answer to that question?

A Art Gelwicks 05:39

I don't have any questions for you guys. Because I think you were very succinct and clear on getting some or giving some ideas to people on how to really get the ball rolling. My personal response to it is usually a two word answer, capture everything, probably the most common problem I see people having is either a, they have things falling through

the cracks, because they just don't have a total picture is to everything that's coming in that they need to deal with, or they feel overwhelmed, because they don't have that total landscape. They're not sure what all they have to have taken care of, and when and how so they make the mistake of trying to keep stuff in their head. And as soon as you start to try to keep stuff in your head, you're asking for trouble. Our brains are not built for that. We're very good at processing, we're very good at manipulating, storing, and recalling not quite so much, at least not in the ways we need to be productive. So as a as a recurring thing. I tell people, if you're going to start someplace, start by capturing everything, I don't care where I don't care what tool I don't care how you're doing it pen, paper, audio recording, digital images, digital link, doesn't matter. Just the pure act of capturing everything will get you started on being able to handle your productivity. Well, that was a fantastic round one. We made it in under time. So that's great. Let's, let's take it to round two.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 07:01

Round two. That brings us to you, Joe, what's your question for us all related to small changes?

Augusto Pinaud 07:08

No, no, it tied up a little bit of what art is talking. Because sometimes when people approached you, you know, hey, I need help and productivity, it is important to to give them the concept that it's not about big changes. The big the big part is the impact that the small changes do. Okay, when you start do them often and do it consistently. So my question is, if one of you agree or disagree with this second, if you agree, you know what, if you have a person who approach what is the smallest smallest change, you will tend to recommend more often I understand it change person to person condition to conditions, but but there is something that tend to come more often than not. So what is that?

Art Gelwicks 07:52

Well, starting with small changes, I couldn't agree more how important that is. Because when you look at people who often struggle with trying to get productive, they get into this boil the ocean mindset. Usually the trigger is they find a really cool tool that they want to put into place. And they tried to do everything in that tool in all its different facets and all its different functions right away. And that just is overwhelming. You've actually created more work and trying to get yourself organized, then you're actually trying to get done. So starting with small changes to move the needle can make all the difference. I'll

go back to my capture everything that little chain can make big movement or the little change of reviewing what you have to do once a week. It doesn't sound like a major thing. But it can be earthshaking, when it comes to actually getting your ideas down and understanding the landscape of your work. So I couldn't, I couldn't agree more. The trick is figuring out which little changes are worth making, and which little changes aren't going to make a difference. And what I tell people this is this is your opportunity to give yourself permission to fail, make it, try it for a little bit. If it's not making a difference, stop making that change, move on to something else, you don't have to get it right 100% of the time, give yourself the opportunity to learn and to iterate rather than just saying, oh, that didn't work. I guess I can't do this. I'm stuck. I totally

Francis Wade 09:15

agree. I the only thing I would add to that is people have that they don't quite understand or get that they are they have constructed a system of interlocking parts. And the accurate diagnosis of that system is makes all the difference in the world. And people sometimes make very strange because they don't understand that they have a system, they make very strange decisions such as for example I've heard of, of employees who leave jobs because in essence, there's too much work or too much email or they don't see why email is important. They go and take another job. And as you may imagine, they just reproduce the same situation. And after a few months, they have the same complaint. And maybe it dawns on a few that just because I changed Java doesn't mean I didn't carry the same system with me. But for those who do understand that it's a matter of kind of like a car engine, you know, you hear you hear a strange sound or you see an unwanted behavior, it's not sometimes not a trivial business to get to the source of it and make the very small mechanical change that would then change everything in the engine to change the way the car operates. The same applies to our productivity systems, really small changes can have huge effects. And misdiagnosis can lead to some degree just arrows like for example, quitting a job. So the diagnosis is all important. And the skill of becoming a better diagnostician is a career, I think it's a career skill.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 10:44

Okay, I'm going to be the slight contrary in here, as it relates to the importance of small changes. This, this comes back to my ongoing it's not a theory, it's it's a guess. So don't take this as as a theory. But the the idea here is that people need to pick the right changes, as art talked about. But I have a lot of problems with the semantics of the tiny habits, movement of small habits, many habits and so and so forth, because they there's kind of a misunderstanding of what that really means. So this I can, I can relate it to my difficulty with the term deep work as defined by Cal Newport in in his eponymous book.

And so he calls deep work, something that is a a period of time where you are, are secluded and are and focused on on on something that's how high value but then he says that shallow work is that which is unimportant work, that takes a little bits of time. And unfortunately, there are times when you can do a little bit of work a little bit of shallow work, and that can actually have a very large impact on outcomes, you know, just a single phone call, and the person that you needed to show up to make the world change for you can happen. And so that's that's my problem with the idea of small changes in terms of its language. Do I agree with you on the premise? Absolutely. I think that I agree on the idea that the right changes and choosing what I consider the Goldilocks zone change, right, or the difficulty within the within the system or the challenge should be in the Goldilocks zone, it should be challenging enough that you're motivated to do it. And that's that's it, that's key for people to understand is that you cannot be motivated for something if it's too easy. So you need you need the challenge to be there. You also need to dial back as it relates to the emotional weight of what you're trying to do. So if there's something that is emotionally sticky for you, then then you do need to dial it down maybe lower than your Challenge Level. Because the emotional resonance is what's actually holding you back. So you've got to deal with both the difficulty level of the of the of the thing you're trying to do, what's your skill set? What's your strength in that particular regard? But also, on the flip side? How much am I avoiding this by virtue of an emotional issue, and once you find the right space between those two resources, then you are capable of doing that small change that will affect great growth. But

A **Augusto Pinaud** 13:24

when I hear what you tree said, It is interesting to hear even when you hear what you know what you just said, a lot of that can be improved if you get the permission to fail and the right diagnostic. And that's one of the things was a small changes that I believe is important. The problem I see many times is people who start welcome going to get organized, okay, or get more productive or control the email or doesn't matter what it is. And then they start conducting this crusade. Okay, that last 12 hours. And I told them ours are overwhelm and quit. And one of the things I love about what art said is the first small changes to give yourself permission to fail, because there is going to be a lot of many failures in order to make change of any habit. So that was really, really important. I completely agree with Francis on the part of the diagnostics and with you on the part of the emotional and action component but but the permission to fail, maybe something that you need to put first on your mind, you know, don't be before you can even go and pick what is that going to be that a small change, then you need to give yourself that give that yourself that I'm okay if this fail, and I'm going to try it until it succeed, it's going to be okay if we fail, because otherwise what happened is between the overwhelming and the failure, you will never make any change.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 14:51

Great Ding, ding, ding and round two. And so let's move on to round three. And for round three, we have the inimitable Francis, wait, Francis, what's your topic about improving over the course of a career,

Francis Wade 15:05

the trigger for this one was a remark my mother made and Simon has been training I delivered a boat 20 years ago or so. And she sat through my training, which I didn't develop it, but I was teaching it at the end of it. She said something along the lines of well, you know, it's good for everybody else. But you know, I'm retired, I don't need to use this stuff. Now, you know, I was crushed because this was like, my, my baby. And I really believed in what I was doing. And what I was teaching was a fixed set of behaviors pretty much along the lines of any most any but most time I've been training and sort of thought sort of crept into my mind. And it stayed with me ever since over the decades of someone's career, how do they sort of be the master of their own continuous improvement? At the moment, most people follow an ad hoc sort of random chase after the next blog post, listen to the next podcast, grab the next book, pick up the next app, and it's all sort of has a movement towards what they believe is better. But is there a better way to direct someone's course so that they can effectively make improvements rather than just leave it up to sort of random, random happenings? That's my question.

Art Gelwicks 16:16

Well, I wouldn't recommend a specific course direction that I don't know that there's necessarily a prescribed outline that you could proceed through because what we're really talking about here is understanding that your productivity system is an organic entity, it actually has a life of its own, it has to be able to react to you. And it also has to be able to react to your changing situations. So as we think about our systems moving forward over the years, I go back to, for example, GTD GTD is one that has had to evolve over time, because one of its core concept has had to evolve context. So when we think about our own systems, and how do we improve them over out over our careers, I would say Apply three criteria. One, what are the things that you need to be doing in your system to make you successful at your current point in your career to what are the things that you need to add takeaway or change for the next step in your career that you're wanting to get two and three? Are you taking time to make sure you're aware of all the different things that are out there not not deep dive, but just high level of opportunities to improve what you have based on the evolutions and learnings of other people. So constantly learning and constantly absorbing is a must. Because if you're not building up that mental

toolset, your systems just going to sit and stagnate. So it's like the Kaizen of professional

Raymond Sidney-Smith 17:45

development.

Art Gelwicks 17:46

To a certain degree. Yeah, you really have to take ownership of it, I wrote an article on this a while ago, your career is your responsibility. Even if you're in a company that has, you know, great HR, and they like your development plans, and they figure out your corporate ladder know, when it comes down to the end of the day, it's your job to determine where you want to be and how you're going to get there. So if you make that part of your system to say, I want to get to this outer point, and if again, if you look at things like GTD where you're talking about, you know, 30,000 foot levels, and that sort of long term planning, which is really hard for some people, just make sure that when you have your system, you are constantly looking at your system and saying, is this keeping me on the hamster wheel? Or is this giving me an opportunity to step out and start moving further down the path. The practical example I'll give from mine is that part of my system includes articles I need to read. And I'm just constantly capturing stuff in there from my news feed reader and from other sources, and then I'll backtrack and read them. Why. Because they help me get better at what I do what I want to know. And ultimately, how I put my system to work

Augusto Pinaud 18:56

I agree with with art. One of the problems I see often in people is they go to a point and then they simply stop that develop. Okay, they do ask me Well, when is the last conference you want? And they look at you like conference, why I'm already there. But then the 10 years happen and they still there, you know, I'm I agree, you need to develop regardless how good your corporate structure is, assuming you have one, you need to develop what that plan is. And not only that plan on the professional, but as a whole, you know what I'm going to be in the next years improving on on the personal side, on the spiritual side on the professional side. And most people mix a miss that mark, okay, they don't consider the importance of that 10 years happened and say, Oh, I better start doing something. And then sometimes they do most times they've even done now will what I'm going to try now I'm so behind. So the plan, my opinion, at least it needs to be a pretty structure plan. Okay, what are you trying to accomplish? So that way you can add elements that you want to improve elements, you want to grow elements that you want to

be better at, okay, because if you just go on the run, the problem was the blogs and the articles on the podcast, and all that is that for most people, then it's a personal a random personal development plan, I will list a bunch of podcast and hopefully I can grab something that will allow me to improve for my career, as Ray was saying early, the first part, hey, if you learn to use Word really, really, really well, you can build everything there. But the problem is that require a certain level of focus, in order to be able to learn the product really, really well. Other than that, is going to be random learning. That's, that is what most people had. So even when you go to, to retirement, and that's something that I'm you know, experiencing with my parents now, okay, in the same way the development plan for their career was what it was, OK. Now they have no development plan, they have no plan for that, you know, as well, where they're going to go through what the wind give them now that they are retired, and I believe they need a plan. And then we have been talking and arguing about it. Okay, what you guys are going to do what are going to be the hobbies, you guys cannot sit on a couch now until the moment when you know, to pass. So but for most people, the lack of that plan and the lack of that element, what produce is exactly that they go and do they find a tip here and article grade, and then they may apply it or apply for a little bit. But there is nothing that helped them concatenate all those changes to really make an impact on all that.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 21:54

My thoughts around career development and any any kind of professional skills development really falls in line with the classical Greek structure. And so we we go from what we call theory, a practice and pieces. And not to get into too much of this. But in essence, the rough translations are theory, practice, and then creation. And a lot of universities that are teaching graduate programs talk about this idea of being a scholar, practitioner, and things of that nature, I think of it in three different stages. So you might be in an apprentice or student sort of stage in your life, where if you're, if you're actually a student, literally, then you know where your skill sets lie, which is in it, which is in learning how to master being a good learner and, and using the material the framework that is given to you through a course syllabus, and a series of course syllabi, in order to achieve a certain level of competence in your presumed and eventual professional space, then you move into what I consider kind of the the scholar practitioner space. And at that point, you are you are not only and should be studying your practice what you what you should be doing, but you should also be practicing what you're going to practice, right. So that's where theory if you know theory, you've studied the material, you then go into this space where maybe it's a further apprenticeship, where there is more practice where you are practicing, you know, getting what I tend to use the analogy of a performance artists who they learn the skills necessary to say be an actor, then they practice that they go to rehearsal, they get booked in a show, and then they have more rehearsals. And so now

they're on stage, but not in front of a live audience. And then they ultimately perform where they get up on stage. And these are these short bursts of moments where they try to do everything to the standards that are for that performance, right. Everything should hopefully be pretty perfect on stage for the audience. And so we go through the stages and we keep vacillating between that we keep going up and down kind of like the Maslow's hierarchy of needs. As we go up and down these various stages, we are experiencing different things, I've always been in a professional space where there has there has been some kind of certification, where you become a certified x, right. So they have a professional development framework built for you by say, if you wanted to become an attorney, well, you go to law school, you pass the bar, then you have ongoing continuing legal education, and you have to take those in order to maintain your license, right you need to practice law in order to further your skills as an attorney and or at least a practicing attorney, that is representing people. And so you have these these natural professional development checkpoints. If your profession does not have that, then I would look to the to the professions that do and to try and set up that same kind of structure almost like writing your own syllabus for your career. And then following that. And I'm I tend to fall on acoustic side and wanting more structure than not. If you don't want a lot of structure, then look for certifications that don't require it just a requisite number of hours of doing what you're doing is enough, then you might decide, okay, well, I want more studying of the craft of the art and science of what you're doing, then then maybe some continuing education isn't isn't necessary there in order to be able to level up. And so I hope that's useful to folks in terms of figuring out what parts theory what part is practice and what part is performance, and developing a syllabus for your professional career that can help you with each of those stages.

F Francis Wade 25:50

I love the idea of the personal syllabus, lots of college graduates, flounder, when they get into their first jobs because they go from highly structured environments where it's highly gamified. Then there's one step the progression is clear when you're in university or even in the first part of your career. If you're, for example, an actuary, just like you said, an actuary or a lawyer or a CPA, you go through very, very predetermined steps or respect to becoming a professional. But in the area of productivity there is let's say there's nothing and you got to do exactly what you said, you got to somehow craft your own syllabus, I think what happens in most people is that they graduate get into their first job. And once they get through whatever certification there, they need to get past they relax, I think they go into sort of cruise control. And they do some of it goes to talk talking about before they sort of put their time in and then they stop improving. Unfortunately, the world doesn't stop changing. technology keeps doing its thing and keep it keeps evolving fast. And in in the we answer the question for people is that your productivity system needs to match the

volume of the tasks that you're trying to manage. And for many, many, many people the volume between their job because of their technology, their family situation increases dramatically. But the habits they use every day aren't even the ones they used in college, which which are usually more sophisticated than the ones they use as an early professional, though, they joined the workforce to sort of fall into the groove in which everybody else is in they go to the same meetings, everybody waste their time. And you know, they the lack of intensity sort of leads them into a lot of that that I think it was to describe and I think the answer to it is exactly what you said is this kind of personal syllabus. Unfortunately, we're not aware that we need to do this, unless we're certainly not trained. So that strikes me as the big challenge of our age in terms of personal protein.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 27:46

And I would even take it further that there's an interdisciplinary and inter field development, that's really important to set yourself up for future success. In In my case, it was adopting and learning technology. And so, you know, it was it was not just my primary career hope, but also understanding how technology fit into it, that actually led me to what I believe is, you know, my own success in the space. So I think don't just think about the insular world of your own professional space, but also how you extend beyond that and talk to your peers, you know, it's really important to do to talk to your peers. Alright, so that ends around three of today's popery of productivity topics, and that leads to my question for all of you, gentlemen. And that is about creating integrations between productivity tools, software, more specifically that not but we can talk about analog and as well as digital, but in essence, today, there are a plethora of tools out there that we are all using, even if we don't recognize that we are just by virtue of probably having a smartphone in your, in your hand, you're using a half a dozen, two dozen different pieces software on top of the operating system on any given day. And so when you're thinking about your personal productivity, how do you connect your various personal productivity tools to really have an integrated life management system as as David Allen would call, you know, GTD, but in essence, the idea here is how do you how do you deal with the integration of, of input that is I input into one tool, but now I need it to synchronize and or automate workflow to another tool. And then the reporting functionality that could be as simple as a notification or a reminder that something needs to be done in the right place and time but also giving back data, say in the quantified self space as I am, where I want to know how I'm doing it, you know, creating my own metrics and understanding the the necessity of meeting those metrics so that I can live

A Art Gelwicks 29:56

my quote unquote, best life? Well, automation is one of those things that I see is almost

catch 22. I like it a lot, I do have some things that I automate. And you're right, there's a ton of tools out there that you can automate things with, the challenge I run into is that it can be a massive rabbit hole, you can spend hours trying to get this to flow to that to work with this thing through no fault of your own, because there isn't standardization of API's and things like that. And I wouldn't expect there to be because these are all different companies and organizations, I come back to a core piece when I look at automation pieces for myself, what I'm trying to do is provide myself the equivalent of a digital assistant. So it's a little easier to explain, if I give a practical example, when I write an article for my blog, I know I have to put it out in certain social media locations for people to be able to read it, that's a very repetitive process with each one, if it's repetitive, it lends itself to being automated. So that's a good example where I've gone through and used automation tools like buffer to go through and push content out. I've used tools to go through and integrate to do it. That works somewhat, but I haven't found it to be 100%. For me, I think it's an excellent idea to look into automation, if you have a lot of repetitive tasks or a lot of things that you think you could spend your time doing better things than those particular one. But I don't think it's a requirement when we we often will hear people say you know, you should be able to automate all this stuff well, should is a pretty big word, if you're willing to dedicate the time to it to learn the tools, as you mentioned earlier, right? And understand how they work how they don't entire all those pieces together, then you can get some pretty big result. Just understand that that is a significant step that you're going to undertake. I think it's a it's a nice to have, but it's certainly not a must have,

A Augusto Pinaud   31:41

you know, Bruce Lee is to set something on the lines of I am not afraid of the man who has practice hundred punch one time, but I am afraid of the man who has practice one punch 100 time I'm with systems happen exactly that I see a lot of people trying to add a new toy or a new toy every week, sometimes even more often than that and wonder why their system collapse and why their system is not as effective as they want it to be. And the reality goes back to when art originally Ray was saying, you know, they don't get time to know their tool, well enough date, they are more into the rabbit trail and the optimization and the outcome ization. And they hope that somehow they're going to be able to dump everything in a funnel and then funnel will tell them Cole john, well, I'm not going to say technology may not get there someday but right now it's not. And right now the important thing is to be able to access to thin where the place that needs to be access. And in order to do that is a lot more simple than what people make it to be. So really my my my advice on this simplifies, you know, every time you think on add a new tool or a new automatic component, a new part think Do I really need this? Or no, you know, really will be cool is going to be a more game. So the problem is we overcomplicate our system,

Oh, now I have the task integrated calendar integrated with the email. And now I get a phone call. Okay, great. Do you know what you need to do next? Well, now I'm waiting for the phone call, okay, that's there, there is still that thinking component, you still need to think you still need to process you still need to organize. And at least as of today, there is nothing that will automate that process for you. That's something that you need to do. That's something that you need to think. And that's something that you need to figure it out how to get it done. I think

F Francis Wade 33:44

this is all tied into being an expert diagnostician, there's, there's a great book called The goal by Eli gold wrath, which is about financial factory optimization. It's a tool in a story format, very easy to read. But it's a great lover of people like me who have industrial engineer, kind of background. And the essence of the book is that you can try to make all kinds of changes to a complex system, like a factory, most of them don't make any difference whatsoever. And I think the same is true with respect to our personal productivity systems, that what what art and gusto have focused on are the kinds of changes that people make that don't make any difference, and that the temptation to basically automate nonsense. And while there may be a tool that will help you to automate something, it's it needs to be sort of examined carefully to make sure that it actually will have an impact. And the book goes into how to determine and how to find the bottlenecks. And that's where you need to focus all of your attention. And I think there are bottlenecks in our productivity systems. As adults, they're not the same from person to person. And going back to the sort of the point we made before that you need to be a great diagnostician to figure out where the bottlenecks are, and then to apply the, either the tiny habit or the bit of automation, or the integration, or the digitization or the gamification, nor all of the possible tools and techniques, but they don't make a difference if they're not applied to the bottleneck. That's the idea of the goal. And I think that's one that would make a big difference to us as adults.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 35:21

Fantastic, fantastic. And so for me, I am a pretty big fan of automation, except I have the skepticism of art in terms of its usefulness, if you don't have the right rails, you know, guardrails on the system. And so I believe that you should not have any automation setup that you can't manage yourself. So the reality is, is that you should feel comfortable doing it. And then the ability to automate it should be a as really, as art said, a nice to have, and then you can't let go automation is kind of like an employee, you have to effectively manage that employee, which means that you just can't set it and forget it, you need to actually pay attention to those things. So I spend as much time probably looking at the

the dashboards of activity of I use Lyft and Zapier and Microsoft Flow. And for those who are on iOS, there's the fantastic new shortcuts application built into iOS and which used to be workflow, the app and the the, the opportunities are boundless. But at the same time, once too many things are automated, and then they start to break, then so does your productivity. So you need to, you need to be able to pay attention to what's happening, making sure that it's, it is actually working the way you want it to, and that it's actually happening. So you just can't, you know, if you ask your a subordinate or an employee or a colleague, even to do something for you, you would probably follow up with them. And or look at the result of what they did to make sure that it was done. So all of those things are probably necessary for both quality and as well as just, you know, execution of basic functions. So if you're going to if you're going to automate great from an integration perspective, one, one thing that I will say has been really awesome, is that through tools like Zapier, I'm able to manage my task management in the tool of my choice. So that has been that has been such a relief in terms of being able to focus on my tasks on a daily basis, on the things that I've chosen to do, as opposed to all of the noise that happens in email and in project management tools. So for example, we use Trello, and a sauna as project management tools in my company for different parts of the company. And I do not track tasks in those systems at all. And I never will, you know, I use remember the milk, and I want it to stay there. And through effective automation, I'm able to funnel those things into remember the milk, track them there and keep my eye on the prize. And so I can communicate with the team in our project management tools, and via email, and I can focus on my tasks in that single place. So think about that in terms of how you're you're dealing with those things. And I actually have it tied to my calendar as well. So you know, I have my calendar that's looking at the views. And I could turn on and off our project management schedules from my calendar and see the tasks in remember the mill and everything else is out of sight. And therefore, I have this ability to attend to the project in front of me which is which is a powerful, powerful modality to be in when you are when you're trying to be highly effective. So just give that some consideration, there are ways in which you can integrate and synchronize those pieces without it becoming an on yielding beast project and overly complex, which is, which is my nature, I tend to make things more complex than they need to be. And so I know that over my, you know, my productive life I have been working to simplify whenever I build a system, then I try to go ahead and refactor it so that it's more simple and more elegant. Because I know that I tend toward that. So if you do just remember that as you look at other ways of integrating and and creating automation, that you look at ways to make everything simpler, so that you don't make it too burdensome on you, as you do monitor and manage the automation. All right, that brings us to the end of round four. And I think we did it guys. I think we we we made it through a productivity popery episode, and I hope that our listeners are enjoying it you our listeners are and enjoyed all the variety of this particular episode. What is your biggest change takeaway from this episode? I want to make sure we

leave our audience with a just a nice little actionable nugget. And so what's your biggest takeaway from today's episode?

A **Art Gelwicks** 40:11

Probably, for me, the biggest takeaway and the the common theme that I've heard through all of our points so far is that we need to focus on starting small, but being deliberate in building our way up into our system and not get overwhelmed, not do the boil the ocean type of thing consistently. I've heard that in this, we talked about lots of big capabilities, we talked about long learning plans and things like that. But all of these come back to start with, with straightforward, basic step and continue to take those steps and give your self permission to fail. If they mess up, try something different. But just keep working on

A **Augusto Pinaud** 40:48

you know, there was a lot of awesome things today. But one of the things I really want to live for people is give yourself that permission to fail, you know, we get the real estate serious into this, oh, I need to revamp the system or I need to get productive for all this. And then we did not take into consideration that in order to make that happen, we need to get that permission to fail. So if there is, you know, anything else, or any of the other things with chalk today, you know, really need to be built on top of that permission to fail. If we don't do that there is nothing to be built. So I will say that will be the most important thing for me today.

F **Francis Wade** 41:32

For me, the most important thing was the importance of going sort of meta, which is that it's great to be productive. But you need to be effective in managing your productive system, your habits, your practices, your skills, you need to be at this next higher level so that you're you're managing the productive activities. And that's that's not the same skill as being productive. Some people are productive just because they work really hard, or they figured out the right set of habits to sort of match their circumstances. But the next level up is to be managing the Gestalt which, if you have that skill, then doesn't matter what technology comes along, doesn't matter how old you get, it doesn't matter what happens with your task volume, you're able to ride around, or live your life at that level and cope with any changes that might come. That's sort of the thing I took away.

Raymond Sidney-Smith   42:30

And I'll round out the episode with the kind of the flip side to what Augusta was saying, which is, if you want a hall pass to success, if you need permission for to fail when you get started, then you need a hall pass for success. And that permission slip is to effective planning. And so you know, the three parts of of any productivity system is is basically planning execution and then reflection a review. If you want to think about it the most simplistic sense. And if you really think about having an effective plan, and that plan could be as as simple or as complex as you need it to be in order to get where you want to go, you really need to think about these different areas of your life different areas of your career, and, and then start just giving more thought to them, then maybe you thought you had been and once it surfaces, then you can overcome some of the challenges that might exist around them. So this isn't great. Thank you, gentlemen, for your thoughts. And this brings us to a couple of items and then we'll close out the episode. First and foremost, if you have a question and or comment about this cast or something we discussed here on the episode, feel free to go to the podcast website there on the episode page, there's a comment section Feel free to leave a comment and or your question and we'll be happy to respond there. We also have a contact form. If you go to productivity cast.net forward slash contact, you can complete the form you can actually submit audio if you want to record a question for us to address on a future episode. If there's a Radha, you let us know and we'll be happy to go ahead and and respond if necessary on productivity. cast.net is also where you can subscribe to the podcast. So there are links for all the various podcast options on iOS and Android. So feel free to check that out. So you can subscribe. Also, if you are on listening through Apple podcasts or within iTunes or Stitcher feel free to give us a rating, some kind of review, let us know how we're doing. And that actually also helps bring more productivity listeners into the fold. So thank you for doing that. And with that, that brings us to the close of this episode of productivity cast the weekly show about all things personal productivity, thank you to stripping out our galaxy and Francis Wade for joining me here and every week on productivity cast.

V **Voiceover Artist**   44:53

And that's it for this productivity cast the weekly show about all things productivity with your hosts Ray Sidney Smith, and again boost open out with Francis Wade and art gallery.