060 Excuses, Excuses, Excuses - ProductivityCast.mp3

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SPEAKERS

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

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Voiceover Artist   00:00

Are you ready to manage your work and personal world better to live a fulfilling productive life, then you've come to the right place, productivity cast, the weekly show about all things productivity. Here, your 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,

Augusto Pinaud   00:24

I'm a ghost tokenized.

Francis Wade   00:25

I'm Francis Wade.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 00:26

And we are back this week to talk about a topic that we have been really excited about, or I've been really excited about talking about, which is the idea of excuses. So many times, we ourselves experienced the idea of making excuses for getting things done. And we hear excuses from others about what they should have, would have could have done and didn't. And so I know that Augusto Francis and myself, we hear this quite often in our world of dealing with people in their productive lives. And so we've heard a lot of excuses. That's, that's all we're going to say there. And so what we wanted to do in this episode was to talk about the idea of what is the difference between excuses and reasons for not getting what you said, you're going to get done, done. And then talking about some of the excuses we we do internally, that is the excuses that we give ourselves when we are not getting things done, and how to overcome those, hopefully, a couple of tips on how to do that. And then how to deal with excuses from others, whether they be at home or in the workplace, how do we respond to excuses so that we can all be more productive along any project path, whether or goal that we might have. So let's get started with the idea that there is a difference between reason and an excuse. I'm going to start off with an interesting gentleman, he wrote a medium article called the difference between a reason and an excuse because the world does not need another thumb sucker by Gary Ryan Blaine. And I'm not going to fully read all of these. And but the the the gist of it is actually encapsulated in the quotation that he starts with, and it's by Mark Twain, and and it says, quote, there are 1000 excuses for every failure, but never a good reason. And the quote, in Blaine's definition here, he basically says that the the difference he believes between a reason and an excuse is that a reason takes accountability for one's actions, where as an excuse is an attempt to diffuse or deflect that blame, that accountability, that responsibility from the thing that you didn't get done. And he uses an interesting health related example here. And he says, quote, a reason for not going for a run is I have a broken leg. And the excuse is, I don't have the time. And I'm, I'm curious from you, gentlemen, do you agree with Gary Ryan Blaine's perspective of excuses, being a personality defect, character flaw? Or is it as an excuse something else?

F **Francis Wade** 03:27

To be honest, I think reasons are what I give and excuses are what other people do.

⦿ 03:35

In other words,

03:36

fair, fair enough, fair, and I

Francis Wade 03:38

say it, that's the reason you see it as an excuse. But that, you know, if I just look at what happens in my life, though, if I take a look deeper, and I get suspicious about my motives, I could see that this is somewhat true. Because when someone shifts from giving reasons, and I've worked with people I'm sure everyone has, where there's some point at which they go from being on the team on the same side trying to accomplish their goal. They are hell bent on achieving it, nothing can stop them. And when there's hiccups along the way, they give reasons, and then something happens. And it shifts and all of a sudden, they go into giving excuses. It's as if the tone of their and the mental model has changed. So they go from being someone who was on our side trying to make it happen to arguing why it can't happen, arguing why they're not at fault, and why they can't be counted on. So it's a it can even happen with the same person on the same project. It's just a subtle, he can't, you can't quite put your finger on it usually. But what you know, in your gut, if you've haven't had enough experiences that they're no last to you. And as they move into the world of deeper and deeper excuses, trying to bring them back into the world of reasons just doesn't work. It's very hard to do like it's possible. But it's very hard work to do. So I think in the very beginning, there is understanding that there is an end for me, there's it over the years of sort of thinking about this particular issue, I think of it like Latin and French. But when you're in the world of of reasons. It's like you're speaking speaking French, and you and I are communicating. And then when that shift happens, it's like I'm speaking, I'm still speaking French, but you've moved on to Latin. So although there is words being passed back and forth, because we're coming from these two different worlds, we aren't really communicating and no progress is being made. And until we get back on the same page, and hopefully it will be on the page of the French speaking reason giving kind of world until we get back onto the same page as no progress possible.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 06:04

I think I look at it a little bit differently. But I don't think we end up at the at different locations, I think we end up at the same location, which is to say that, for a person who feels like they are making excuses, on a consistent basis, you know, I think, you know, giving giving a reason for something not getting done, can be looked at as an excuse from the other person. And I think you're absolutely right there, you know, when, when I give a reason for me not getting something done, that's very different than when I hear excuses from others for not getting things done. But when I give a reason for something not

having gotten done, I do recognize that it's because of the locus of control, that is I had control over the situation, and something beyond me, created, perhaps something that didn't allow me to be able to get something done. But I've taken full responsibility for whatever that is. And I take this into perspective a lot. Because as the as the owner of the company, I'm, I'm the I'm My head's always on the chopping block, right. And I very much believe in that perspective that, you know, I'm not going to throw my other people under the bus, I'm the I'm the front end of the business. And so when someone has a problem, I'm going to take, take it on the chin, so to speak. And because mistakes happen, no matter how good everybody is, you're always going to have mistakes that happen. And so the idea behind giving an excuse to me is throwing one of my staff members under the bus, as opposed to me just saying, you know what, I'm really sorry, this is my company, it's my responsibility. How do we fix this, there's a connection between a reason being something where you're taking responsibility and accountability, personal accountability for the situation, and you've decided to do something about it with that person, or, or, or with that organization, versus an excuse, kind of giving up control and saying, Okay, well, it happened to me. And so therefore, there's nothing I can do about it. And I think that I think that's where the author of the article, and I put a link to that in the show notes for anybody who who does want to read it. And that's where I think the author was coming from, although I don't particularly think that he articulated in a very, in a very compassionate way. That's that's kind of where he was, he was coming from. I will note to folks that when I was very early on, in my studies of personal productivity, I came across a very short book called question behind the question by john G. Miller. And it had a market impact on me in many different ways. And the QB Q, the question behind the question, idea is really around personal responsibility and going the the kind of next leveling your personal responsibility as it relates to almost everything in life. And he gives some really interesting little vignettes, as examples for why people should take on this level of personal responsibility in their life. And so I would recommend it to anybody who is struggling with the idea of giving excuses.

A **Augusto Pinaud** 09:17

When we begin discussing this, I make the note saying, Well, is there really a difference between the recent and the skews, and as I'm listening, I saw where the people come was a difference? Yes. If I give you I'm giving you a recent even that the other person is listening, you know, as an excuse, and I think it is important to to have the self awareness. Are you really doing a recent, you know, as the article says, Well, my, I have a broken leg. Okay. Okay. And are you using that, you know, as an excuse, or is really legit. And I why I said that is dairies people, we picked example of the running, who has done it with with a broken leg who have done it, in many ways. So when are you giving yourself that excuse? And you're trying to reason with that excuse? So that way, you know, well, you know, I'm,

it's not an excuse, I'm giving myself a reason? Well, okay, that's valid. If that's what you are doing, okay? Or are you really using the argument have a reason to be okay with excuse you're putting, now when you said, Hey, I'm going to to stop drinking coffee? Okay. And I do at 3pm on the second day, go and say, Well, okay, I'm going to have a coffee, but it's just going to be this time, because I'm really tired. I need to folk well, is that a recent? Or is that excuse, and I will insist on my original comment, when I make the note on? Well, you most cases, the line is so thin, between one and the other, that most of what we are trying to do our excuses, not reasons, we can find any valid validity on what seems to be a recent, so we don't call it a skew, so we don't feel bad about it. Well, in reality, what we are doing is just define this cute we have so we can do it and feel okay about it.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 11:28

So this takes us to the construct of how we make excuses in our own worlds, or however you place it right i think i think we come down on the on the reasons and excuses are perhaps a little bit intertwined. And for some people, whereas they're very distinct things for me, for me, their excuses are the the areas of our life where we don't feel like we have control and and you guys can disagree with me there were challenged me there. But for the for the most part, that's where I'm, I'm coming at with regard to the the thoughts I'm sharing. And so the idea here is that when we make excuses for our own lack of productivity, our own lack of, of whatever it is, that was the deliverable, when we make a an excuse for not reaching a goal, they come down to a wide variety of of, of excuses that we do make, right? It may be that, Oh, well, I don't have the right education, I'm afraid of of x or y or in the past I've failed, there may be some level of lack of focus or lack of certainty, there may be uncertainty, and or you don't have true north in terms of the goal again, going going back to lack of focus. And so what I'd like us to do is to talk about some of the things that we can do, as it relates to moving ourselves away from making excuses for ourselves, as we're trying to get things done. How do you when you hear yourself saying, when you hear yourself making excuses for something that you want to get done in your own life, you have this goal, you have this project, and you want to make it come to fruition? How do you get yourself out of that space, and into a place of action into a place of forward progress again,

Francis Wade 13:29

so when I was younger, and I think this happens a lot with young younger professionals, I thought I had control over my time. So there's a really popular book was written, I think, in 1973, or something. And then mccain is called How to get control of your time and your life. And it spawned a whole academic set those sort of direction the academics went in, in the early 90s, when they started the study of this. So there's the question of controlling

time, getting control of time. And I think we're at the point know, that if I were to introduce the idea of controlling time to a class, I'd be laughed out because we don't have control over time. I think we have gotten to the point where we realize, well, there's no such thing as your time. There's only your actions. And the idea of controlling time is just, you know, it's not possible. You know, we don't we don't get to have control over that. And I think that the evolution that someone goes through is that they think they have control over time. Eventually, they realize that they don't, that they have control over their actions. And then as they get even more mature, they realize, you know what, I don't have a lot of control over that either. There's some influence I have. But control is a really strong word, which implies that you can predict the outcome with extremely high probability. And don't even have tomorrow. It's not, it's not promised to us, I think there's a Jedi mind trick in here somewhere where we think we have control. And when we experience this loss of control, we give excuses, but at the end of the game, I think there's a realization that we have no control over anything. But does that throw us into the world of excuses? For some people it does. Some people go into depression and say, Well, you know, I can control anything my life. So I'm just gonna lie here in bed and not get up. But I think there's a another alternative, another possibility, which is that even if you don't have control, you can still take responsibility, still find reasons to make things work, and still come up with still be on the sort of the French team that I mentioned before, still be in the game of achieving some objective or making a difference. And you can do that all the way until your deathbed. And there's lots of examples of people who do so even in the face of the fact that you realize that you can't control an outcome, that your influence might, at the face value be miniscule, you may think, you know, who am I, I don't have nobody reports to me, I don't have any money. I'm a poor public speaker, I have physical challenges, I have this I have that I have the other even with all of the objective evidence, you can still pick yourself up, realize that you don't have control, and still jumping the game of making a difference, as long as you're still alive. Now, I'm not saying that that's every day behavior. But I think that if you can give up the idea of ever having control and do it early on in life, it sort of frees you to play a game of making a difference, even though life is fickle. And even though the next hour isn't promised to you,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 16:57

I wanted to kind of clarify for folks listening, which is that control diminishes as the time horizon extends out from you. So you don't have a lot of control over an hour from now, or a day from now or a week or a month. But akin to kind of what Tony Robbins has has written about in the past, or at least us where I first heard about this idea, which is that you have control over the next five minutes, you know, what you do in the next 30 seconds to five minutes, you have control over that. And, and and not much beyond that, right?

You know, after you get beyond that time horizon, then things become out of your control. And as you said, Francis, there is a a misconception there is a an illusion that we have control over things that we do not. And and so we need to remember that as we go into the world, I do stand back always and say that our locus of control is, is in some way shape, or form and illusion. But that we have to have some level of belief that we have control over what's going on in our world. And I think that level of belief comes from us planning effectively, right? Knowing what projects we have in front of us, knowing what the the smaller chunks of those projects are leading down to the actions so that in the moment, when you can do that action, in that 30 seconds, you get the opportunity to say, Okay, what is it that's on my plate? What am I able to accomplish right now, and can I move this project forward, and then the next five minutes, the next 15 minutes are then far more productive for you, if you know that you have control of the future, if you if you make action in the present, then if you think about the future, and all of the emotional stuff that comes into play, I really believe that a lot of this is emotional. So the idea of making excuses like I don't have time, I don't have money, I don't have the right resources, I don't have the right people, all of those things are merely in our, in our merely forecasting your, your lack of those things. And while I'm not a big, you know, I don't prescribe to the idea of, of, of, you know, if you if you wish it it'll come true, or any of those kinds of thoughts there. I I believe that what we really need to do is manifest reality through the appropriate organization of what we want to happen. And we can do that we can very much say, Okay, these are things that I need to get done. This is how I'd like it to get done. And course correct change course, as the project goes forward, as you're trying to be more productive, make adjustments be flexible and adaptable. And understand that, even though you don't have ultimate control, as you said, Francis, we still have some level of control, which is in the immediate in the here and now. And so if we plan on one side forecast for what potentially might go wrong, plan for what potentially might go right, and then make action in the present, we then give ourselves a lot more control over the future than if we did nothing, I just kind of throw up our hands, I would suggest

F Francis Wade 20:24
a way out. Let's put it that way. Because the word control implies it's a it's a strong word. And, you know, listeners may not know but you know, pause recording on a podcast between three guys in three different locations is, is a precarious business. And our podcast, you know, the provider, the platform of our podcast could crash in the next 10 seconds. And then we'd have to re record or start recording again next week or so we don't even have five minutes of podcast available to us that we can control with a capital C. But the there's a weird though, because I think what what and I point to the Warner quote, which I think is in the show notes, which will be in the show notes. It's from Werner Hyland, he describes what he calls calls in the matter. And it's a it's a made up phrase, I

think, or never heard it before hearing it from him. But causing the matter means that there is some effect out there, and you're organizing your molecules to cause it to happen. Regardless of whether you have high low control, high control, high influence, low influence, whether you're strong, weak, big, tall doesn't matter, you make this mental shift to being caused in causing the matter. I remember when I first heard the quote, I put it in front of me on my desk, I was working on a project that I remember. And I would look at it every day because I couldn't understand it. And it took about a year to a year and a half to begin to sort of get to the bottom of it. I remember when I'm global, global warming came out. Because I was teaching courses around responsibility at the time. And it seemed that global warming was overwhelmingly huge. And no one could ever control global warming. It's too big. It's, it's and it's true. You know, it's the first, the first reaction people had with respect to a huge objective, like global warming was why even bother, you can't do anything about it. But to use his language, enough people became causing the matter that we now live in a world in which many people are causing the matter of global warming. And many people are working hard at it. And even though they will probably die without most of them, because most of them are adults, most of them will probably die without seeing the numbers reversed or slow down. They're willing to because in the matter, because in the long term, they see that it's possible that hey, yeah, if I do my part, then eventually I could influence the outcome. So I think there's a way out and it's a language change from the left my suggestion, a language change to this concept of causing the matter, which puts you slowly leaves you free to cause any results you want, as long as you have breath, just choose the Choose the result and decide, okay, let me let me try to make that happen, let me cause it. And then with your right up until your dying breath, you can play the game of making it happen if you can free yourself from any hang ups around control or influence. That's my suggestion is that that that, again, it's kind of a meta, a Jedi mind trick. But it's a could be freeing for some folks who are listening.

Raymond Sidney-Smith   23:48

And I would agree, I think that if semantically, what works for you better is to think about your influence over the matter or being able to have cause and effect. And instead of control because control and how you've defined it. Francis's is very, is a very, you know, strict definition for you. If that is the case, for you who's listening, it's it's very important that you use semantics to your advantage. And so change that language so that it then becomes something that you feel, again, going back to the psychological construct of locus of control, you know, use the language that's going to fit you. So if that's influence, if that's persuasion, if that's cause whatever it might be, use that language to be able to help motivate you to be able to make forward progress on the things that you may, may be making excuses about, that you don't need to be. I mean, that's the end, that's the end

result, I think, that I think we all can agree with is that we don't need to make as many excuses, when we, we take on some of that personal responsibility and accountability, and recognize that there's always something that can be done. And so just taking a deep breath, and letting the emotions that are that are challenging your, your decisions to move forward. Because that's what you that's what it usually is, right? Some kind of fear based, anger based, you know, motivation to create inertia on on you, or to you, the goal for yourself is to be able to just do some emotional regulation, you know, take a deep breath, understand that, that emotion doesn't control you, and then start to make other decisions about how you're going to move forward.

A   Augusto Pinaud   25:29
So in the same way, we were discussing about excuse, so we go to control, okay, and I agree, we cannot say I'm going to control global warming, but I can say, I'm going to be responsible for not or for reduce my contribution to global warming. And I think that's, that's an important distinction to make, you know, people think, Oh, well, I can't control this, therefore, I do nothing. Okay. In many cases, you know, that's exactly the moment to look at this from the other perspective, know, you may not be able to control it, but can you be responsible for the part that you are? In effect, so when you go to work, okay. And, and let's bring it back to, to productivity, you know, well, my boss is the organized, I can't control my boss. That's true. That's not actually true state. Okay. But that means Can you be responsible for the things that you need to track with him? I used to work in a place where it was funny, because my boss was it was reporting to the CEO, and the CEO used to call and say, Can we have a meeting? But don't bring your list? You know, could I control him? No, there was no way. But I could camp, you know, things responsible to the part where my things do not blow up. Okay. So yes, I had a list. And every time we sit about talking a, I bring my whole list and drive him nuts. But we're, the problem is when I said, Well, I can't control my boss. So now I'm coming back to, I'm going to use that as an excuse not to find, or to create, or to envision a system that can help me manage that. And that's where sometimes we make the problem we recent. Okay, well, I can't control the bus. That's the reason. Again, we lead that reason, be an excuse. And that was the reason I was saying early. It's a really fine line between a real reason and an actual risk, you know, and it's like global warming, you know, can we control global warming? No, but we cannot make that as a reason not to try to do a little bit that you know, that is in our rich, to prevent that the global warming goes bad, you know, same way boat it well, my boat doesn't count. Well, that's true. Okay. But if 10 million people believe that their boat doesn't count on data on boat now, that's 10 million boats, 10 million boats, in any electoral process will make a difference. So now, are you letting the fact that your recent that your boat doesn't count? turn into an excuse not to do that? Or are you taking that recent Okay, and are acting responsible or as responsible as possible? towards what you

can foreseen is the act, you know, same thing as fear. Okay, well, I, I have here this kind of more time. So what I want to admit, well, writing a book, you know, I don't, I don't I was recently last week, you know, discussing with somebody and, okay, and why don't write a book, because the book is easy to write? Well, I may find you any person who has published a book to respectfully disagree with this with this person. So we go back to that, okay, the reason doesn't matter, the person has a book or not inside of them. Okay, there is a fear, and that fear is bringing a recent, and now that recent has turned into, from the this person perspective, into a valid skew. And so

Raymond Sidney-Smith   29:20

with that, I want to I want to close out this, this segment, with just a couple of quick kind of almost summary points about what we've been talking about. And then we can move on to the excuses we hear from others, and how to really work around the excuses from others so that we can stay productive in our own worlds and systems. And, and, and really deal with those things. So first and foremost, as we've talked about, quite a bit, personal responsibility, taking responsibility for one's own world, and accepting responsibility, almost indirectly, for the work of others is actually important, if you are any kind of leadership position, to the latter point. So this idea of personal responsibility, and, and, and tangential responsibility is actually very important, make the make your fear of the unknown, known as, as they say, kind of in the social justice world, you know, shining light on injustice. And, and what we really need to do is to be able to bring light onto the fear of the unknown, so that the so that the cockroaches scatter, and that could be, I don't know, I don't have enough money, right? Because all that might mean is that you just need to look at your budget. And you need to look at what's going on in your finances. Just see whether or not you're in appropriately spending money, you maybe you can realign some some dollars to a project that you didn't realize, or talk to your financial advisor, if you have one and figure those things out. Maybe it's you feel like you don't have a skill and so you fear being able to go out there and, and go do something because you lack that skill. Well, that fear of the unknown then becomes how do I learn that skill, because it's very likely that there's this thing called the World Wide Web. And if you access it, you can probably learn that skill from the World Wide Web. And it's very, very easy today for us to be able to turn the unknown into the known and not to really go down the Dunning Kruger effect, you know, lane here of pretending that we are thinking that we know more than we do, I think genuinely if we help to eradicate our ignorance regarding something, or our lack of competence in an area, we can do that today. And, and that takes just this, this change in paradigm for it. One other final point, and there are many other things we can talk about, you know, making making goals smaller and smaller into the actions, you know, iterating and and making sure that we're focusing on making our next project better every time we do fail. Failure is part of the success process. So as we fail, learn from those

mistakes. And then the the final point is that, if you are going to, if you're going to go down this path, you need to stop being comparative. So what what your neighbor does, you know, keeping up with the Joneses, just because your friend made his first X dollars in in one year doesn't mean that you need to do the same thing, your path is unique. And you need to do what you're going to do on your own timeline. And if anybody tells you that, you need to do it in the same timeline as everybody else, you know, your four year, you know, college degree needs to be gotten in four years, because it's called a four year college degree is nonsense, if it's going to take you five, if it's going to take you three, if it's going to take you four and a half, that's that's the time it's going to take you. And I've seen many people take much longer to get to their goals than they ever intended for them to take. They're glad they that it took the time it took because they learned so much more along the way, they learned the things they needed to learn along the way to get there. So I think that it helps to reduce the excuses and to increase the your own self efficacy and being able to say, No, I know what I need to, I want to get done, that I desire to get done. And I will get it done by virtue of effective planning, effective control, influence persuasion, cause as, as Francis said, and, and really make make action. Now in the present. That's the way in which you overcome excuses, because then it becomes something that's tangible, that's real, that's in the present. So let's move over to the idea of how others excuses impact our own personal productivity, and how we can overcome that in some way, shape or form along the way. So how do we deal with people who make excuses to us? And we have to work with them.

F Francis Wade 34:02

I want to build on what a goose to said before in answering this question. He said that there's a fine line between excuses and reasons. And I think that that is the way the world is constructed. And Matter of fact, I would say the world is made up of that there's no difference between the two. And that people have a freedom to be responsible in one minute and not be responsible in the other and they move between the two, as if you know, it's all one big blob of stuff. And I think the leader, the leaders role, a good leader, is always brightening the line between the two and separating the two and putting distance between them. I think that's what we're trying to do on this podcast is for a definition of this particular topic, is that we are already has declared a distinction between the two, and has asked us to participate in a conversation to further separate the two to further distance between them. And for a leader. So what that means is, well, a few different skills from people that I've interacted with. One is that they can very quickly sense you know, are you speaking French or are you speaking Latin, they can tell whether the person that they're interacting with is in the world of reasons or in the world of excuses. They can they have like a finely tuned sense where they can figure out body language tone, words, way of being what have you, but they can figure it out quickly. And once they can see it clearly

because they've been they've trained himself or they've been trained over the years to see it, then they can go to work at it and say something about it and address it. Because if you can't see it, you're you're you'll never be effective in being able to separate the two. But if you can see it, you can say Hang on a minute. So when you said that you came late today because of the traffic, and that it's out of your control totally which which your mind frame is that you're being responsible, or is that more of an excuse. So you can start to have a conversation with someone to put distance between the two. Because ultimately, what the leader wants is a company full of people who have who see them as black and white and lots of space between them. Because people who can see them for see it for themselves, can catch themselves when they fall into the hole of or the the the gap or the issue or into the problem of becoming a victim and saying you know, I was late because of the traffic and because of the potholes and because of those people and because of the this and that and the other, the if you can empower people with that kind of thinking, certainly can think of it on their own, then you'll have a company of people where you you can essentially sit back and have them run the show, so to speak, because they would only involve you when you absolutely need to be involved. And when they're involved in you, they're not coming to you with an excuse, they're coming to you for a reason that you become involved. So this is a personal skill, I think for anybody who aspires to leadership, and it creates the kind of followers that are boy from my experience are pretty powerful if you can make if you can have followers who give reasons versus excuses and sort of continue to create the gap between the two.

A Augusto Pinaud 37:35

And I think there is a Morton distinction there when people is ready, you know, to have to have that. General that been that been that responsible and being ready for, for doing that. Because the problem, the problem also is, you know, you can turn to be into really obnoxious when you're trying to show people or even ask people, are you responsible or not? Or do you want to be responsible about this or not? And responsibility is interesting on most of our listeners is something on the day today, but also is one of the things that tend to drive nuts, some of our listeners, because as some of our listeners are, you know, working or have work into grow that self responsibility. They also deal significantly with people who haven't yet get to that point. Okay, who who don't understand where where that that responsibility is on their forward? Well, they don't see where that skews, is, you know, where that excuses just excuse or where is a reason? Okay, or if that reason is not really a recent but excuse, and that also make, you know, make this into that process at a complicated one. By the way,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 39:04

as I manage people, I'm always thinking about the environment, because that's where everybody experiences their work. And so my my thought is, how do we how do we use the environment as a mechanism for accountability, and to make sure that when people are coming into that environment, it is one two things, excuse free, and which really lays into the blame game, and a lot of how society and culture today really focuses on blame, as opposed to responsibility and personal accountability. Again, going back to that john G. Miller book, and the the other side is the, the fear based emotions that tend to drive drama and gossip, and, you know, finger finger pointing, and so and so forth. And I would, I would imagine that, that that probably is all bundled into the same thing, since excuses and, and blame are all fear based emotions as well. But the idea here is how do we set up the environment for a joy, a, a, an ecstatic, passionate perspective, so that people want to get things done, and when things inhibit them from being able to do so they immediately think about how they can, how they can turn that into progress. And so from my perspective, you know, it's about setting expectations and setting up the environment so that they are poised for success. And that may, for some people who who are not necessarily, I don't, I don't tend to hire those people who have problems with these issues. So again, it's about it's about self selection here. So the people I hire, the people I hire tend to be GTD years who were excited about the world, right? So but but if I, if I did have, if I did have people who joined me who had issues, then that's where rewards and loss aversion tactics are then capable of being brought into place with the appropriate feedback loops. So remember that immediate feedback is really important to the human brain. Because the human brain takes that immediate feedback and is excited by it, it's, it's a part of why in game design, we give immediate feedback to the game player, so that they are immediately aware of what they did right or wrong to achieve a result, which means that they can then iterate on that they can do better the next time, or decide that they won't do that thing anymore. Again, loss aversion, right, I'll lose points, I'll lose a life, I'll lose some resource if I do this thing. And so therefore, I will change my, my, my pathway, so that I don't come into that same, that same space of loss again. And so how do we how do we move people who are in that space to the other place, and I believe, set up the environment for success, don't put them into a place where they're going to be unsuccessful. For example, I'm very much a fan of of the first break all the rules by Marcus Buckingham, and I'll put a link to that in the show notes as well. And and, you know, he really talks about this idea that we need to capitalize on strengths and minimize weaknesses, and that people don't change that much. And he says that several times throughout the book. And and I think that that's really important for us to take to heart here, which is that if someone is really bad at email, then then stop forcing them to communicate with you via email, pick up the phone and talk to them, text, message them, walk up to them and talk to them. But don't keep beating a dead horse, so to speak. The

idea here is to work with people in the way in which they're going to best work. And I certainly have people who are I understand that about me and work with me the way that I best work. And those are, those are my best clients. Those are my best employees, those are my best vendors. Those are my best stakeholders, and, and and colleagues. And so we need to all recognize that sometimes we just have a weak point. And instead of making excuses for others, and for ourselves about those things, we can easily just set up the system to say, Listen, if your emails more than five lines, then you need to pick up the phone and call me because I'm just not going to be able to deal with it. It's overwhelming to my system. And I cannot respond to emails that are five lines or pick up the phone, if you need to write more than five lines of emails. And this happens in my own world, I have to explain to people that if you're going to send me an email, don't send me one email with 15 points in each of them. Because it's very difficult for me to respond to all 15 points at once. I would rather get 15 emails and be able to respond to five of them right up front, five An hour later, once I've gotten more stuff done with related to those particular items. And then the last five tomorrow, or three days from now when the rest of those things are done. And, and that's not the way in which everybody works, Francis, you might be different or Cousteau you might be different. But and that's the point is that there is this, there's beyond the golden rule, which is, you know, do unto others as as you would have done unto them. But the reality is that I believe in that sort of next level rule, which I've I've written about in the past. I've called it the diamond rule. Other people have called it other things. Tony Alessandro has called it the Platinum rule. And that is, do want to do unto me as I would like done unto me, that is, you have to ask, ask me how I like I would like to work. And if you ask me how I'd like to work, then I will tell you, and then you can do what I want. Does that take a little bit more work? Yes. Does it mean will be more effective? Yes. And so this notion of people should conform to the culture of the company, because I said, so is foolhardy. And it goes against, really right now, which is a very individualistic society, you know, Americans, by and large, are, are very self oriented. And and that's something that I hope changes over time. But that's just where we are. And so therefore, work with it be more productive by helping people identify this is the best way that I work, and then facilitate how the system can do that now, is everything going to be able to be done? Personal personally tailored to every individual? No, but you can certainly do that with the key players in your in your world. And I think that that's a way in which you can move toward a more productive environment where there are less excuses, because there are less reasons for them not to be productive. Yeah,

Francis Wade 45:47

I know, lots of leaders who do that. What you're saying, because essentially, what you're doing, some of what you described is taking responsibility for where other people around you can be effective. So you're, you're looking at their what they can and can't do, and

then adjusting your behavior accordingly. To help them to be effective, you're constructing mechanisms around them, that would move them sort of nudge them towards being more effective. And this is what is what leaders do. You know, it says, if if half of my company is ineffective, then it's something if I take responsibility for that, and it's something I can do about it. And unfortunately, there's lots of leaders who don't take responsibility for all other things, including their own company's performance, including the people who report directly to them, including to the but the bottom line, you know, the recession is on, it's not my fault. I can't do anything about that. And I am powerless. I'm a victim of bad circumstances. It's just bad timing, and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, it goes all the way up the chain, it's not this way of being that we're describing is it, there's no guarantee that a CEO has it, or that an entry level employee doesn't have it. It's, it's, it's slippery, and we don't like talking about it. And I think the default to what part of what you're saying is that there is nothing in most people's environment to tell them when they're not being responsible. And the only reason I can I can speak with solid conviction around this issue is I, I had a coach for both a decade, 10 years, who every other week, got on the phone with me and and pointed out where I wasn't being responsible that no quick learn, that's 10 years of conversations, for me to get the conviction, Aveiro this. And if I hadn't put that in my life, if I hadn't paid off my pocket to have it in my life, there's no way the environments that I was in, would have taken me as fast. And as far as I went, this they weren't the world doesn't, isn't designed to coach you in where you're giving excuses versus reasons we're being responsible or not. People would rather keep that to themselves, they may notice it, some will notice it, but most people will just keep it to themselves, they're not going to call you on your stuff. So one, one option, if you if our listeners are really interested in taking things up a notch and being able to see and therefore create the gap between being responsible and not responsible, is personal coaching, it's, it's intrusive, and it's annoying. I got fired a couple of times by my coach who I was paying. But, you know, years after the fact, there was no substitute for the experience I had. So there's things that we can introduce into our life that would help us to be more responsible, and they are not everyday, ordinary things. I don't think everyday ordinary for most people produces that result. It's just my experience.

A   Augusto Pinaud   48:51

So productivity coach is important to make a distinction for the, for our listeners who have not had the experience been coach before, when you said 10 years, is, you know, it is in the in this particular case, I'm willing to make an assumption that has been assigned us build an audience on responsibility. You know, we you go to a little bit, a little bit a little more, a little more, until you get to that. And that's one of the things that that coaching can do, you know, coaching in general can do, it doesn't matter where you start, it's know that every coach in last that long, most of them don't, but it gives you to allow to identify more

on more and more were on how to get that it's not necessarily about fast learner slow learning has more to do with how deep Do you need to go into that plus the other things that came as you begin removing those

Raymond Sidney-Smith 49:53

onion layer, what I'd like us to do is just in just kind of a flash round is to give our listening audience. Our final takeaways, what's what's what are the big takeaways that you have from today's episode?

Augusto Pinaud 50:06

When you think about recent and excuses, okay, tried to put yourself on the other person? Because what for you may seem like a good reason for the other person may sound as an excuse, no, I'm not saying you want an explanation to people or to other people. But be aware of that distinction, number one, number two, when you talk about control, think about how much is I can control but also, how much can I influence that lack of control? Where is I may not have control over the whole picture. But what out of that whole picture, I may be able to have direct influence that I can help to change a little bit that all the results that that lack of control will produce, I think those two things are really, really important to have. And to keep in mind.

Francis Wade 51:06

Yeah, I agree. And I think that the magic of this is that when you when you shift from giving excuses to being responsible, or being cause or having influence, it, it, it It starts off small, made by just a mental shift. And nothing in the world has changed except except your mind. But my experience is that it's the beginning. And once you start taking responsibility in the way that we've described, you can't quite predict where it's going to go and you can't quite see or quantify how you're going to surpass all the obstacles, you can't see whose we are going to be involving and who's not going to be involved. You can't quite game it and say okay, here's the plan going forward, now that I've decided to take responsibility. The fact is, first you take responsibility, then the context shifts, and then you play the game. And then it looks very different on the other side. So it's more a matter of having this internal transformation, the sort of the beginning. And then the this different world opens up. But the shift comes first. And that's unfortunately, it's not business as usual. Respect the homeless people live their lives, their lives, we're really talking about an exceptional way of being here today.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 52:23

And I will close with the fact that if you're making excuses for not reaching bigger goals in life, lean into present oriented action, not the past, not the future. and problem solve so many times, it ends up being a a problem that needs to be solved. And if you take heart in the fact that you can solve it with enough grit, determination, creativity, and otherwise, you can make it happen. Drive progress, even when it's not done in the time you wanted to complete a project or reach a goal. Things get done in their own time. But action is always the right thing answer. And so Gentlemen, thank you very much for this episode. This has been a lot of fun. I have a couple of announcements before we close out. First and foremost, if you have a question or a comment about this cast, or something we discussed, if you're listening from anywhere other than the podcast website, we invite you to jump over to the website at productivity cast.net there on the episode page. At the bottom there is a comment field you can feel free to leave a comment, ask us a question and one of us will be glad to respond. Also while you're there on productivity cast.net you'll find the show notes, you'll find links to everything we discussed. And if there isn't something linked that we discussed, please but one of us know and we'll be happy to add it. And you can also learn how to follow and subscribe to the podcast there on the website. If you have any other question about productivity cast or personal productivity, you have a topic you'd like to suggest. Go ahead and visit productivity cast.net forward slash contact and let us know we'll be happy to hear from you. Thanks to gusto and Francis for joining me here on this productivity cast. If you could please add a rating a review in iTunes Apple iTunes or Apple podcasts for helping us to reach more listeners by by rating or reviewing the podcast you actually expose us to more personal productivity listener. So that's really a great thing and thank you. That brings us to the close of this episode of productivity cast the weekly show about all things personal productivity, here's to your productive life.

Voiceover Artist 54:30

And that's it for this productivity cast. The weekly show about all things productivity with your hosts racing a Smith and a goose open out with Francis Wade and art gallery.