061-Personal-Kanban-ProductivityCast.mp3

📅 Sun, 07/14 08:04AM   🕐 47:29

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

con bond, tasks, personal, system, productivity, board, manage, people, backlog, combine, projects, cards, create, work, progress, visual, tool, problem, manufacturing, applying

SPEAKERS

Art Gelwicks, 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

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

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I'm Francis Wade. amo goes to printer.

Art Gelwicks 00:25

And I'm Mark LX.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 00:26

And we are back this week with an episode on a topic that I really enjoy talking about. Because it's such an interesting flavor of a productivity system. What we're going to do today is we're going to talk about personal con bond, which is both a methodology and a book very similar to getting things done by David Allen. And so personal con bond mapping work navigating life as a book by Tony and Mario Berry and Jim Benson. And the history of it is actually found in combine the TGO, no lean manufacturing process that was developed back in I believe, the 60s or 70s, I could be wrong about that. But the idea here is that it has since branched off into a process management and proven methodology. The ideas behind con bond have since branched off into process management and improvement methods used by many in the productivity community, especially in the Lean Six Sigma and agile communities. And the development in practical terms. Con bond is in essence, a visual process management system. And con bond actually means Billboard and Japanese. And so that's what you're what you're going to do, what you're currently working on, and what you want to do or what hasn't been done being these visual boards. And so you're moving things along the process. And in essence, you're moving things forward. There are many tools out there that can help with these, and we'll talk about some of them. But today's goal is first to talk then about personal con bond. And that of course is then how you take con bond, the con bond methodology of of lean manufacturing process and the process management improvement methodologies into your personal productivity world. And so what we're going to do is we're going to talk a little bit about personal con bond, we're going to talk about how to use con bond in your own productivity system. Some of its benefits some of its, its its ways of working. And then we will talk about how to get started with personal con bond if you've never actually used to con bond board before, and what some things you could do to take your personal con bond to the next level, if you have used to con bond board in the past. Let's start off with the very basic what is personal con bond, personal con bond actually has only two rules associated with it. And so the idea here is that you visualize your work. And number two is that you limit your work in progress. But two rules and personal combine, it makes it very simple. And this allows you to be able to create a level of control of your work so that you can then visualize what the right things are that need to be done, then plan for what is going to be done in very, very quick fashion.

Art Gelwicks 03:13

It's interesting because the term con bond can throw a lot of people off. And when I when I try to explain to people, what con bond is, I always swap the term off with post it notes. Because that's basically as complex as it gets the the methodology works it just as well with post it notes as it does with any technology solution. And that can often take a lot of

the fear and uncertainty and doubt away from approaching something like this.

Augusto Pinaud 03:38

I like that that approach of call it post it notes instead. That's that's a pretty brilliant one. For most people. I agree with you, when you use words like combat, people get confused. It is or confused may not be the right word. But he's like, that's a weird thing. I don't know exactly what it means. So therefore Let's not talk about

Art Gelwicks 03:55

Yeah, the end. The unfamiliarity of the term can really hurt people's adoption it,

Francis Wade 04:00

I guess I comment it from the from a, I guess a different perspective, because it was a topic I was taught as an industrial engineer, as an undergraduate. So I've been using the were familiar with the concept ever since since I was I guess, 20 years old, 21 years old, or whatever. And I was really surprised to see it come over into the personal productivity world. But I know it from I know it and I've used it from from ever since I was an undergrad.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 04:29

So what are the benefits of visualizing one's work in playing to the first rule of personal con bond? Why should one visualize their work?

Art Gelwicks 04:40

Well, right away, one of the things that I recommend for people when they're doing that is you're going to surprise yourself by how much work you actually have. Con bond, by its nature, because it is either physically or visually tied. When you start to capture all of these things that you've got going on. Unlike a do list or unlike a project plan, combine really forces you to recognize the amount of work that you have on your plate. And that right there is often overwhelming to people, because they see all this stuff. And they realize that they probably haven't even captured all of it. But it is so important to be able to truly have a mental images to the amount of work that you're trying to handle. Specially personally, because we never give ourselves an opportunity to do that. at work. Yes, we have to, you know, report to other people what our work level is. But personally, the only person we have to report this to is ourselves. And often that's the way we

procrastinate and hide is to not have an overall perspective as the amount of work that's on our plate.

Francis Wade 05:45

Over in the manufacturing world. The benefit of big benefit of using combine is that it gives you a an easy give a group a team an easy snapshot, because typically the combine borders on a wall somewhere. So everyone was playing the same, same sort of playbook. And when they could see how much roughly how much work there was to do by just looking at a glance. And if something was off, someone could raise a flag and say no, that's not correct, because this and that on the other and it would bring immediately bring everyone into the same space. It was. And if you're in a team environment and team is working on projects at the project level, then it can be really useful because then the entire team can agree yes, these are the items that we're working on. Again, it's better if it's visual, and if it's on a wall. But it can also work on a on a website or on a page or as an app. But this the the group visualization that that sort of that that was a big benefit map back most still is in the manufacturing world.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 06:49

And it creates a sense of accountability. I think, you know, if you see what needs to be done and who is responsible for that thing to be done, then it creates a sense of accountability, which is really great.

Art Gelwicks 07:00

provides you the opportunity to say no, or at least the supporting data to be able to say no, often you'll get hung up on there's this much stuff going on, can you do this? Can you do this, they don't have people who are requesting things don't have that perspective as the amount of workload you have. But this kind of visual representation. And when we start talking about work in progress and workload capabilities, that makes all the difference, because when you know you've got 40 items queued up, and you can only handle three at a time you have the ability, then say no, I'm sorry, I can't. And this is why.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 07:36

So question I have for you all kind of in mind with this is who do you think personal con bond is best for? Who's the individual where personal con bond will really be a foundational part of their personal productivity system and will benefit them?

Augusto Pinaud 07:52

So I don't think there is a particular person I think there is a particular moment where personal can ban incumbent nation was whatever is your your, your plan will work fantastically well. One of the problems I often see in on the productivity systems is the workload comes up and down. So that's, you know, it varies when the product when your request on your demands start coming up to the level where it breaks the system, okay? It's not necessarily that you need to create a new system, what you may need, it's exactly that it's a personal Cameron, go get from your system and make it in a graphical way. That is basically what that will provide. So you understand where your attention is going on till it goes down to the level that your system can manage. And what we tend to do sometimes is, oh, well, now I broke the system, let me recreate the system, well, I'm not going to say the system doesn't need to be recreated. But sometimes he's not about creating the system from his crutch, he's about giving an extra tool to that system that can handle that additional volume, that additional pressure that additional elements that you need. So sometimes, that's a lot more useful than try to do you know, everything else.

Art Gelwicks 09:17

I think there are certain types of people, though, that this lends itself more to people who are very lyst centric, or outline, model centric, in keeping track of the things may struggle a little bit with the almost the landscape type of approach to a con bond solution. Also, honestly, people who are very mobile centric, if you do all your tracking, and your maintenance of what you need to do off of your phone, because con bond is this graphical spread things out type of approach, the to physical media may not match up well.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 09:55

And I would, I would probably agree there are that there, there probably is a source a person who is also creative, a lot of creative professionals, like the ability to kind of spread out or organize themselves very remarkably, the best artists, I know whether they're commercial artists, or not commercial artists or fine artists, the idea here is that good order creates great art, and, and not just great art gallery.

Art Gelwicks 10:26

I was so not gonna let that one go, just so you.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 10:31

And so the idea here is that if you if you do need a high level of structure visually, in order to be able to to be able to park or externalize that that system, so that you can focus on your creative processes, then, then something like personal con bond, I think could be very, very useful. Because you can then make it for lack of a better word is pretty, you know, as you can make it more aesthetically pleasing. And that way you are comfortable taking what is in your head, how you want to take the kind of chaos of what needs to get done, organize it and order it in a way that that is aesthetically pleasing to you. And then you're able to then focus on your real art, right what you really want to produce. And so I think there's there is, and are certain types of people that can be that this can lead to more. But I also want to agree with the gusto in the sense that there are certain circumstances as well, where personal con bond can be really useful. And I think that certainly for discrete projects that have clear milestones, this can be very, very helpful as well. So if you get into a situation where you're feeling a bit of chaos, then the idea then is to is to visualize the work immediately, so that you're able to to say this is where things are. And this is where things need to go to, to go to get to the next step, and then to the next step, and then done. And if you can identify those steps, those milestones very easily along the project path, then personal con bond is a good method for being able to get you there personal combo, it's also a great way if you have multiple things, multiple disparate projects going on in your personal life, maybe for work, maybe for

Art Gelwicks 12:24

nonprofit group, maybe for Home Repair, automotive, whatever. The fact that you can have cards in flight, step away from the project, then come back to it and know exactly where everything stands. Without having to do any digging through your to do list can be really empowering.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 12:43

How do you measure the progress or success in personal con bond? How do you How would you if you use personal con bond do that? Or how do you if you do use personal con bond in parts of your system? How do you measure success there?

Francis Wade 13:00

command my answer to that with the answer to the prayer question about who you who should use it. I think it's really it's it's real for people who have very few tasks, which is why I don't recommend it. for personal task management, the my experience trying to use a

Verizon I used I tried to use Trello was that the number of tasks I was trying to manage using the visual method had my had me scrolling to several pages long, which meant that things got lost. I think that the reason I don't recommend it for personal task management is that, whereas in the manufacturing world, you're always dealing with limited physical space, which is why what what makes combine sort of very useful is that it translates a physical reality into a visual reality. Which is, which is great, because there are real limits to the amount of stuff you can keep in a physical space, factory floor, for example. But tasks, there's no limit to the number of tasks that you can create that in fact, you shouldn't stop yourself from creating more tasks, of course, it creates a challenge of prioritizing them, but you should never stop creating them. You should never stop inventing them and coming up with them and coming up with new projects. And you may not choose to execute them immediately. But you should never stop the flow of new ones, you should always have a way to keep creating and therefore keep capturing the problem with carbon is that it's not built for that. It's not built for a psychological objects is built for physical object. So in making the transition, when someone is trying to manage lots of tasks quickly, I think they add add add enough tasks that the tool itself becomes a problem. And it's not suited for this kind of task for any kind of task management above a really small level project management for a group. Yes, but even for even at the level of individual project management, I think the same problem applies, which is that you can create a you can read 100 projects, if you want. The Love is not the hundred. The problem is the challenges how to prioritize them. But you need to capture the hundred but capturing them all in this block format of lists, which is a traditional layout becomes too hard. It's not it doesn't scale. In other words,

A Art Gelwicks 15:18

okay, now I'm going to totally disagree with you, Francis, totally disagree with you on this because I think and I'm going to use a an analogy that I think everybody can relate to, which is the classic honey do list. If you think about some of the core tenants of combine the backlog and the work in progress, that backlog of accumulating tasks, it can be one, it can be 100, it can be 1000, it doesn't really matter. They all wind up in the backlog. It's how they're managed through the work in progress work. So yes, I would, I would be inclined to agree that this is not optimal if you have 100 tasks in flight being executed at the same time. But if we're talking about personal, that's not the case, you may have them kind of in your mind, but you're not working on 100 different things at any given time, you have only a certain amount of bandwidth and a certain amount of work in progress. pipeline, for lack of a better term that you can run your tasks through.

F Francis Wade 16:18

Yeah, but you, you you always you always get to that point. And this is true for everyone where you have to decide what to do next. And yes, you can go to what you think your work in process, maybe. But you also want to be able to access high priority items that aren't in your work and process lyst. So when you're switching from one task to another, you can artificially limited to the number that are happened to be in your trailer display. put it that way, you have to look at have some way of looking at the hundred and something because you may want to start a brand new project and now you still are back at the problem of choosing which one do I start or which task do I do next?

A Art Gelwicks 16:57

This is where I think the technology solution crosses are from the post it note because I would totally agree with you if we were talking exclusively physical card, but because within the technology space, you can do things like applying categories, and applying hashtags and keys to be able to dynamically filter and sort, then you can start to look at that relay out those boards on the fly without actually changing the board content. It does force you to take this to another step of complexity. Because you have to plan for all of those things. But I think you can still apply the same things that we're talking about here. Whether you've got 200 cards and in your master board, for lack of a better term, and have it diced and sliced based on different categories. Or you have 15 different boards of say 20 cards each that are helping you organize different things. I think it works both ways.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 17:54

I think this takes us to our to our next. My next question for you all and maybe this The next topic of our debate, and which is how do you limit work in progress. So the rule number one in personal competence like Fight Club, though, the first rule of personal con bond is to visualize your work. And the second rule of con bond is to limit your work in progress. And so by limiting your work in progress, this allows you and in their definition in Barry and Benson's definition, it's the work you can handle at one time. And so limiting your work in progress is a primary rule. So is it kind of from the essentialism perspective, or from the perspective that in the bullet journal by writer Carol, the bullet journal method by writer Carol, he talks about this idea that the bullet journal should only hold that which is which is vital to you the essential things that you should be doing? And so is that the answer then to the personal con bond system problem that you're talking about Francis, which is that if you have too much in there, then the system collapses? Because the second rule is limit the stuff you you put into the system.

F **Francis Wade** 19:09

Yeah, exactly. It's a little bit like, you know, when you're a kid, and you wanted to carry something to school the next day, and you leave it by the front door, so that you know you wouldn't forget it, what you're basically trying to do is to create a visual reminder. So that's a it's a fine system, so to speak for in a really small number of items, because you can leave one thing every other week from the door. But if you try to leave, and people, lots of people try this literal visual reminders of everything you have to do in no time you end up overwhelmed, you end up because you're your eyes can't keep track of all those visual reminders, you can't keep track of all of that busy stuff in your environment. In other words, it all turns into white noise. And you have to make a transition from that point to a different kind of remain the system. So you may, you may, for example, hire a secretary or you may put reminders in on your on your smartphone. But the visual technique that they're talking about the both the visible visual technique, rule number one, unlimited work and process comes straight from manufacturing where you have to work in a team environment, and everyone has to be able to see and you're limited by physical space, you don't have those limitations when you're doing personal task management. And you have to, there's just no way to avoid the transition that you have to make from using visual reminders to using other kinds of reminders. And it's just because the number of tasks becomes impossible, impossible to visualize, even if you Even if you say okay, let me take the top 10 you put the top 10 on a board. And we've all done this, you know, okay, here's a 10 I'm working on. And I just start working on the first one, your mind says Ooh, don't remember this other thing you need to work on as well. And when you're finished that you need to do that before any of the other 10. So you you immediately break the rule that you've just created, it doesn't make sense to then keep a list of 10 either keep a dynamic list, which is somehow being finding a way to pick the best task in every single moment. And that's easy when you have five tasks to do when you're a teenager, when you're an adult with 200 becomes a real challenge. And that's where the combat system gets in its own way. From my perspective,

A **Augusto Pinaud** 21:24

one of the things on which I'm coming back to I agree with part, if you go to paper, the system choke, there is no way to handle when you handle now electronically, the system gives you so much flexibility. But when you consider the third option that is used to personal combat, just a support for your current test system then doesn't matter. Because the detailed you are not looking at the personal Cameron as a place where all the details are going to be, you are looking at the personal camera and as the place you are going to come to look at the high level of the projects, you have the high level of the thinking. So the forest if you must, and then you can manage that regardless, and then come when you need to go to the detail, then you go to your task management, whatever that is, but

then the personal campaign allows you to make sure that the things are moving forward, in which your task management may or may not allows you to see that progress, you know, in a really clear way. That's the reason I tend to recommend things like the personal combat when you are completely overwhelmed, but not to manage the detail of the tree to manage the whole forest. So you could see how the things in the macro level are arranging themselves. And moving forward,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 22:52

I wanted to take a little bit of a diversion here in the conversation to the idea of slack in combat bond. So we talk about the idea of slack and personal con bond as the perspective that we create some wiggle room some some buffer between what is being done and what needs to be done. That that is what you want to get done in the future, what is currently being done. And then the things between those things that are currently being done. And I wanted, I wanted to kind of just quickly talk to you gentlemen about this, which is what what do you believe? What do you believe is the kind of success factor in moving projects forward in con bond is it slack Is it is it the ability for you to create buffer space is that the way in which you use the system is it that you use technology technological way to filter so that things are fewer envision visual, you know, in your visual field, as art was talking about, you know, today with something like Trello is as as Francis pointed out, which is probably the most popular personal con bond software out there. The idea here is that if you have the ability to filter in the con bond system, then the issue of too much visual clutter goes away to some extent, and gives you a greater focus. The other may be that you just have many boards, and in the case of of Trello, you can have, you know, dozens and dozens of boards. So that gives you some level of control over that kind of that that visual clutter problem that does happen with the personal compound system. So what do you think is is the success factors in, in, in making sure that you're using your personal combat system without this level of overwhelm?

Augusto Pinaud 24:42

You know, one of the things that I believe the personal Cambon give you an advantage is allows you to see the data from a different perspective is the same data you tend to have on your personal system, whatever that is, but allows you to see it, organize it in a completely different ways. The same thing, when you go and say, Okay, now, I'm overwhelmed, let me get my system and try to make a mind map of everything that I have. Okay, the thing was in mind maps, and in comparison with a personal campaign is that is the personal camera and allows you to have a lot more structure than what for most people the mind map produce. So it allows you to get a more clearer image of,

Okay, this is the different stages where everything this is. And now I can visualize my data in a completely different way. So I can figure it out what need to what I need to focus on. So I can move forward with this,

Art Gelwicks 25:50

I can use from my own practice my own personal example, I have multiple con bond style boards that I run at any given time. And I I have one that's for my personal stuff, and within that con bond board. And it's actually independent of the tool, because I do have a tendency to flip it around from tool to tool, I have categories of cards that are for automotive, things I need to do and household repair, and yard work and nonprofit work and all those different categories. I'm not trying to break things down within those categories, those are purely for capture. So when I need to throw a new card in there, or my wife comes down and tells me something's broken, and I need to go fix it, right, I can throw a card in the household chores, one, and it's in there. Then when I go through, and I go to process, what I'm going to sit down that morning on Saturday morning and knock out for the day, I then have that entire backlog across all of those categories. And I can drag cards over into that into the structure of in progress. And I know when I have three or four things in progress, or in the in progress column, that's as much as I'm going to be able to get done for the day as he one's done, I can move it out of the way I can access that from my phone. So if I'm wandering around the yard, and I have something that I just finished, I can get that little sense of satisfaction of saying, yep, you're done and move it over to the to the next column. This mechanism is no different than what we do with every other tool that's out there. If it's an A list style tool, and you're applying categories and filtering, and checking things off, as in progress are done. If it's an outline style tool, the concept is still the exact same. The biggest difference here is that the con bond card methodology really helps people who are visually tied. But aside from that, I don't think it's overly complex. The same rule sets, for example, this concept of work in progress, how much work can you do at any given time, we should be applying that to every system we utilize and every variant of every system, because that's a basic rule for just operating every day. If you don't know how much work you can handle at any one time, you will get overwhelmed. And if you don't give yourself the permission to say no, you will get overwhelmed. And this idea of slack in con bond also applies to other thing, when I talk to people about tax, I'll say Think about it. Like that little gyroscope used to play with as a kid, you'd wind the string up around it, you pull it really hard. When you did that it would spin up to a speed and it would stay at that speed for a while and then it would start to slow down. Well, you couldn't wind the string on it and pull it again until it stopped. You need that time for tasks to get started to execute. And then to wind down before you jump into the next one. Well, this idea of slack is that giving you that opportunity to spin tasks up and allow them to spend down before you jump into the next item.

Francis Wade 28:51

I think it's important to, to add that in a manufacturing environment when campaigns are being used. This isn't the only tool to let's be news. There's also a lot of Gantt chart thing that's happening on somewhere else, usually not not on the con bond board. But the combined board is a way of controlling the activities that are happening in that very same moment sort of on today or short term horizon. But in the background, someone has accounted for the slack between activities, major activities and major deadlines and a project because it's accounted for using that tool. But that that's not to say that comeback is a great tool for managing slack. I happen to think it's not why because on a personal level, it's not accounting for the 24 hours that you have in a day. So you're doing all of that mental cogitation sort of on your own in your own mind, while you're looking at the visual representation of the activities that you need to get done for the day. So it's basically not no better than a to do list or a set of lists which are read side by side. But your own budgeting of your own time and your own choosing as to what to do next, your own prioritization as to what's important. That all takes place outside of that system, and still has to take place, especially if you're managing a huge number of tasks, you can't, you can't escape the obligation to account for these other items I come on is a simple representation. If you're managing a large number of tasks, the off board calculations that you have to do to create this simple representation become overwhelming.

Art Gelwicks 30:32

Okay, but here's the thing, combine is not a time management system. That's the first thing we have to remember, it's not designed to help you manage an hour's worth of work a day or four hours worth or eight hours worth. It is a task and and literally execution based system, I use con, I'm going to pull it out of the personal for a second and use a professional reference. I said a con born con bond boards, which is hard to say a lot for things like editorial processes and creating content. So personal example when I do my own podcast, I have a whole series of buckets that every podcast episode has to go through in my backlog is a listing of all the ideas that I want to record and then carry them through those. Yes, con bond is not telling me that this is going to take two hours at this particular stage in the process. But honestly, I'm not asking it to do that. I'm asking it to help me manage the flow through the stage gates. So I agree with you completely. If you try to use con bond as a time management system, it's going to fail miserably, because it's just not built for that kind of thing.

Francis Wade 31:46

And just to add to that, if it which is why I say it does, it does work at lower numbers of of tasks because then you're not, you're not your scarcest resource isn't time. But if your

scarcest resource is time, then when you move items from your waiting list to your work in process list, and don't account for the time that you actually have somewhere. That's when a problem occurs. So it's fine if there's not if there's a lot of slack time in this in your personal schedule, or you have a lot of discretion over your time. But if you don't, and you're going to really, you know, my last half an hour isn't scheduled the state because I had so much stuff to do, then it doesn't work. So it does work. And then it doesn't work. But it depends on the person.

A Art Gelwicks 32:27

So let me ask this way. Could you combine the two? Could you do kind of a non structured scheduled approach where for example, you're scheduling blocks of time to execute things based on maybe scale things that are going to take an hour things that are going to take a two hour and then within con bond, identifying when the cards are created, that you estimate a particular card should take about two hours, then when you're going to go and look at your schedule and say, Look, I got two hours of available time here. What cards Could I put in progress? That means that criteria? Would that work as a happy medium? Yeah,

F Francis Wade 33:04

yeah, yeah, well, it because know you're using, you're using combine as a view into your task management system. It's a view that's different than then seeing it's your system, which is where personal combine goes there, they're starting from the manufacturing world and saying, Hey, we're taking this great idea which works over here. And we're trying to get it to work over here. And it's not meant for over here from my point of view, their whole their whole our other decisions. And this our psychology you're dealing with and as your personal time limits. Other things come into play that don't happen in the manufacturing world and the way account bonds are used in that environment. But as a view, or anyone could use every everyone should use. Or anyone could benefit from the state that way, the view that you just described, which is what are the items I'm working on, in the very short term, having gone through your your consultations, where can I get a glimpse of that list? Sort of simply? Where do I need to flip things around? Because now I know that everything can fit into a day. It's a different workflow than the one that I believe the authors are trying to, especially when they say things like you should limit work in process is a What does what does that mean exactly in this in a personal context?

A Art Gelwicks 34:23

Well, it's still a very valid concept, though, in a personal concept contest, because when

we hear the complaints from people, they feel overwhelmed, they feel there's too much going on. Why? Because they don't know what their bandwidth is, they've never taken time to understand how much work they can handle in progress. And it varies from person to person, it varies from time to time, some things choke down in your bandwidth, some things open it up, if we're able to assess that at a personal level, I think we have a better chance of assessing it at a professional level two. Oh, true. I agree. It's just that when you say limited work in process, or work in progress, it implies that a human being can't manage, for example, 150 projects at the same time,

F   Francis Wade   35:08

and the fact is a human being can why because you're not managing at the project level you're managing at the task level. And as long as you focus on one task at a time, and then choose the next best task to work on. Next, when that task is finished, you don't have a problem, you don't have a challenge. As long as it's all handled in the background. See, they're there. They're bringing in a physical limitation and applying it to a psychological object. And it's not it just doesn't match.

A   Art Gelwicks   35:33

But it does match. If we look at it from the perspective of you're talking about managing tasks, keeping track of all of them, what has to be done, what we're not actually talking about doing them, and I'll and apply them to physical assessment. If I have two cards, one is to change or rotate the tires on my car. And the second card is to mow the lawn, I can manage both of those at the same time in my con bond system, bike, but I cannot physically do them at the same time. So when they move out of my backlog into in progress, that means I'm actually doing them and there's only so many things I can do simultaneously.

F   Francis Wade   36:13

Even though even the free is backlog having 200 items in quote unquote backlog is is not whole is not how things are managed hope, hope manufacturing processes are managed. If you bring that same idea over into the personal world, it makes it sound like you're behind but you're not behind. It's just that you have 100 of the projects and all of them have a to use GTD they all have a next action, which is not a problem is not a backlog, it's just a choice, make the choice. And then you can execute a keep making choices and executing, trying to keep them all in backlog and combine is where the Overlord and overwhelm can happen because it's not meant for that purpose. backlog is an idea that works works fine in the manufacturing world because of their releasing, releasing jobs

onto a manufacturing floor in a steady and controlled manner. But in a personal context, you can create, like I said, 200 projects, and to call them all backlog. And to treat them as if you need to keep an eye on all of them at the same time is a big mistake that task management needs to happen outside of a con bond somewhere else, which is why I don't think for large numbers of tasks, the combined system is sufficient for small numbers of tasks, yes, but as a number grows, you need other supplementary systems. And if it's a view, that's fine, but carrying all the analog analogies from the manufacturing world from my experience doesn't work.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 37:41

And so let's let's talk a little bit about the person who's never set up a con bond board before and how they would set up a personal con bond board in in Barry and Benson's perspective, you would create a value stream in essence, a con bond board is set up in it has three levels, you have the itself, you then have lists. So those are the different, you know, value streams that are in the system and or the value stream in the system. That is where things move from. And those things that move are the cards in arts analogy or direct relationship in the in the scheme morphic sense is a post it note. So if you had a board and a series of post it notes, you would have then say in the most simple value stream as Barry and Benson say it would be backlog doing and done. That is work you're you're waiting to be done, then the work that is being done currently, and then stuff that has been completed. And so you move things from backlog to doing to done and then things from doing to backlog as they go on, say a hold status, and then back to doing and then to done along that path line. So you establish your backlog through identifying the stuff that you need to do. And then of course, you have do identify your whip your work in progress limit. And so Barry and Benson talk about the idea of setting up a number. And that can be arbitrary to begin with. So say you say I can only have five or 10 items in my backlog at any given time. And therefore those are the only things that will show up in my backlog. And that's your personal first personal con bond board. And I think that makes a lot of sense. I think for most people, you're going to be in a perspective where you need to be able to visualize the board so that it gives you the ability to see at very quick glance, what are the most important things that are going to move your goals forward. And thankfully, we have technology. And so while I don't disagree with either you or art in in each of your particulars, I think that technology allows us to have a whole lot of stuff inside of personal con bond board today. And then because of filters, we can then drive away the clutter at any given time, which is the thing that I don't want to see right now. And I can see the things that I do want to see right now, which are the vital few backlog items, the vital few doing items and the vital few done items, if at all, for for specific project or specific view. I mean, in the context view of GTD or some other methodology, we can actually filter to not just one project too many projects at once seeing it in that

visual sense.

F Francis Wade 40:31
Every every task management system could benefit from a combined like view it as an overlay. If you could press a button and just have it switch and have it present some of the elements, I think the thinking about working processing, you should really want to do working on one thing at the moment. So they really should only do one thing in that column. The things that are in backlog aren't really a backlog. So the languages off and the point of view is off. But the clear listing, I think every task management system should be able to you should put the hit the button and just see, okay, here's what's in my quote unquote, can band for today, I could see my my tasks, and I'm looking I'm looking at today and I can juggle them around and I can manage them and I can move them backwards or forwards depending on the commitment. I think that's that's really useful. It's sort of a window into your tasks. I think that's us,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 41:24
we probably have way more we could talk about relating to personal con bond. But because of the time on the episode, we are going to wrap ourselves up and we will come and revisit this topic again, I'm sure in the future, I wanted to get any big takeaways or tips you have for our listeners of this episode. What are your final comments on this cast?

A Augusto Pinaud 41:47
Well, I think, you know, we are in agreement that as a compliment tool for your productivity system for your task management system can personal campaigns can be really, really powerful, powerful, especially on those moments where your workload personal professional are both gone above what your system can manage. This is a way to corral and look allows you to see easily the big picture. So if you have never tried that, you know spend some time put in not the details, but the big picture items on your system into a personal combat. So you can see the whole picture of what you can do on work on it.

A Art Gelwicks 42:29
Yeah, I think this applies to any system, but specifically con bond, this is one of the things you can get overwhelmed extremely quick. So start simple, start easy. Don't try and load everything you're doing into a con bond board system right away. Start with a few things,

work through the process, make sure you're comfortable with it, make sure you like the visualization. It can be a very deep rabbit hole if you're not careful. But it can also be very powerful.

F Francis Wade 42:54

Just to reiterate that, I think it's if you're going to use it as a standalone system, it's really for a small number of tasks. I don't think that that matches the needs of most working professionals who have who are up in the hundreds easily of things are committed to doing. I think it's an again, just to echo what you guys have been saying. So it's a nice, it's a nice view of a nice way of looking at what you got to do. But it's not a substitute in terms of a complete system, I don't think is robust enough for that doesn't scale.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 43:24

And I'm going to close out with just reiterating the fact that Trello is awesome. And but there there are two other con bond style software that I do end up recommending on occasion to folks where Trello is not their ideal. And that is one called Meister task. And Meister task is available on Android, iOS, Windows, Mac and web. So it's across all the systems, all the systems, but most of them and and so Mr. task is actually just another flavor of, of con bond board system. And I think that it works really well and integrates with several others systems. And so it's really unique. And then then the third one, you know, if it's not Trello, and it's not Meister task, and you are super geeky, the there's an open source con bond software, you can self host your own com on software. And it's called we can and I'll put links to all of these in the show notes. But the idea here is that with we can, if you are, if you're in kind of the development world, you can, you can use all kinds of really cool things within individual cards. And one of the things that it does is it allows for swim lanes in the same board. And that can be really useful. So you can have multiple swim lanes with multiple color, you know, coding for those swim lanes. And so you get some really sophisticated boards, not that you can't have very sophisticated boards and Trello and other tools. It's just that I like we can for the ability to, you know, self host your own boards and the ability to then create swim lanes in the same board. So the very cool stuff there. There's two more that I just want to throw in real quick one is Microsoft planner, which is actually a professional tool, not so much a personal tool, but it is a con bond based solution. That's pretty simple. The second one is inside of the application notion, notion has a board view tied to one of its lyst structures, so that you can flip the list around view it as calendar, view it as a regular list and view it as a con bond board, and it is dynamically updatable. So there's two more that people can look at. Fantastic. Thank you. And thank you, gentlemen, for this discussion of personal con bond. As I said, I'm sure we'll come back to this topic again. In the future. I hope your listeners get some

perspective on a truly unique and highly visual personal productivity system like personal con bond, and it might work for a specific project managing goals to drive action, and even entire productivity system can be inside of a digital or analog tool less and accepting Francis's warnings. Before we close out, I'd be remiss if I didn't ask our listeners that if you have a question or comment about personal con bond or something we discussed relating to it, feel free to head over to productivity cast.net if you're not there, and there find the episode at the bottom of the episode page, you can leave a comment or question and some will be will be glad to respond here on productivity cast. net. You'll also find the show notes, you'll find any links to resources we discussed. So you can jump to those from the show notes and you can learn how to follow us and subscribe there on the website. Now if you have a question or topic you'd like us to tackle here on productivity cast, please visit productivity cast.net forward slash contact, you can record a voicemail there or write us a message and thank you. Also, if you can help us please add a rating or review in iTunes or Stitcher for kudos and to help us grow our personal productivity listening community. Thank you. And I wanted to take a moment to say thank you to our listeners who have already given us ratings and reviews on iTunes. We really appreciate the positive accolades we've been receiving. So thank you very much there and we hope to keep bringing you the best we can with productivity cast thanks to Cousteau Francis art for joining me here this and every week on productivity cast. That brings us to the close of this episode of productivity cast the weekly show about all things personal productivity is your life. Take care everybody.

V Voiceover Artist 47:18
And that's it for this productivity cast. The weekly show about all things productivity with your hosts Ray Sidney Smith and a goose open out with Francis Wade and art gallery.