

064-indecision-s-last-stand-how-to-make-great-decisions-prod...

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SPEAKERS

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



Raymond Sidney-Smith 00:00

Hey there, productivity cast listeners. Before we jump into this week's episode, I wanted to make a small apology and a big announcement. First, you'll notice the delay in getting this week's episode out. Sorry about that. The reason why you'll notice as soon as the episode starts, the audio quality for my track is a bit wonky. I was on a cloud environment because of work travel, and had to record that way hoping the audio was usable. After a lot of internal debate. The audio is not ideal, but it's palatable. We always strive to give you as clean audio when we can as record across thousands of miles between us and time zones. So hopefully the content and audio over listening through this episode will be back to a quiet recording environment with next week's episode. Next, the big news. As some of you may know from being in my GTD meetups in Washington, DC in New York City, I'm hosting a live remote conference productivity summit on October 4, and fifth 2019. To learn more and register visit productivitysummit.org. This is an idea I had about five years ago to bring together all the personal productivity experts and community I've met along my own personal productivity journey over these many years. Today, we have the technology to do that without having to travel but to our nearest desktop laptop, or mobile device, which you've already done if you're listening to me right now. So a few details about productivity summit, it will have four tracks track one is productivity, how to be more productive, using principles, strategies and techniques, track two is his technology, what and how to use specific technologies to get things done. Track three is all about

organization how to get your home or office more organized, and dealing with clutter and disorganization. Generally track for finally is our business development track, which is for those looking to build or grow their businesses more effectively and efficiently. I know many attending will be professionals, executives, coaches, consultants, authors, bloggers, podcasters, professional organizers, developers and creators who are looking to expand their businesses. So this is an online into growing your skills in that department. We also have ample opportunities to interact live with one another. We were planning networking opportunities during productivity summit. So it's about learning and building community, we're all more productive when we all know how to be more productive. We also have an area we're calling the game room, which is where we'll have some digital interactive, where you'll be able to actually take the lessons from your sessions, learnings and put them into immediate use productivity summit is free to attend. It's all accessible virtually through your web browser in my free community platform into which everyone who registers will be invited. The point of productivity summit is to bring us together in real time that life happens and we all won't be able to attend the summit live. We will provide replays of the sessions through Sunday evening, October six 2009 us eastern time, so you can catch Miss sessions or rewatch sessions you found especially helpful. Otherwise, you can buy access to the 2000 19 summit video replay library, which will be available after the summit closes. It's available now and early bird pricing. It goes up as we near the summit, and again after the summit replays end. So grab the replay package before the price increases, if you think you'll need it. All right. As you can imagine, I'm thoroughly excited to bring you productivity summit, and I'm going to get back to work on making that happen. I hope to see you all at productivity summit. Please share and spread the word about productivity summit to everyone you think maybe interested. The more the merrier. Again, you can learn more about the productivity technology organization and business experts from around the globe speaking at productivity summit, and register to attend at productivity summit dot work. We hope it's the most productive two days of your life. I know it will be for me.



Voiceover Artist 03:46

Are you ready to manage your work and personal world better to live a fulfilling productive life? Then you've come to the right place, productivity cast, the weekly show about all things productivity. Here, your host Ray Sidney Smith and acoustical now with Francis Wade and our gal wicks.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 04:03

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



04:08

and I was Toby No, no, Mr. Gilbert.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 04:11

Welcome, gentlemen, and welcome to the productivity cast listening community. Today we are going to be talking about ending indecision. That's what we're going to do today, we're going to conquer indecision. And we're going to talk actually, about what decision making is in the context of personal productivity and how indecision affects our personal productivity. And in the second part of the show, what I hope will do is to talk about some of the various ways in which people make decisions, some of the decision theories that are out there. And then we'll blend that into how to overcome indecision. And the third segment of the show was talking about really some of the, the heuristics and the methods that we have used and have helped others use in the process of being able to make good decisions when those decisions are difficult for us. So let's start off with defining decision making. And what is indecision? How do you all how do you define decision or indecision in the context of personal productivity?



Augusto Pinaud 05:14

indecision in the world of personal productivity specifically goes to you have all these set of projects and actions and things to do, and you have no clue where to start, where to start, or if you can start. So what that produce instead of pick something and move, even if may not be the best thing to move forward, what happened is, you are paralyzed, so nothing progress, nothing move forward, nothing gets done, because you don't know where to start. Okay, that's how I will define diet indecision on the productivity world.



Art Gelwicks 05:52

This is probably one of the hardest questions that that there is, is what is making a decision. I mean, it's, you know, get up and do something, if you have two things, and you gotta do one of them, you got to pick one. To me, it's what has the greatest return with the the minimum amount of downside. And it's, it's making that determination, determining what's the worst thing that could happen, and then acting on it. Even that's a terrible definition of decision making. There's much better ones out there.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 06:23

And I think we're all in the same general area, which is that we are trying to identify whether or not to seek out some end. And that's ultimately what a decision is, is seeking out an end. And humans are creatures that love to have closure, what we call psychological closure, we want to have all those open loops closed, we seek out closure and decision is what closure are we seeking out. And it could be in response to fight flight or freeze any one of those responses, right. So most people hear as fight or flight response. But this actually fight flight or freeze, we can actually stand our ground and take action right in the moment. We can flee from a situation and or we can freeze we can we can be paralyzed in that moment. And I tend to believe and we'll talk about this later in the episode. But I tend to believe that the freeze part of the fight flight or freeze response is what often stymies decision and therefore creates indecision. So what I want to talk about is kind of the components of decisions, what are the pieces fundamentally underpinning making a decision, and I'll throw out a couple of things that I can think about. And I've, in my research for this episode kind of came across, and then we can get some thoughts, some responses surrounding that. So first and foremost, decision requires some kind of goal or objective. And this is not for your everyday decision in terms of, should I go get a coffee in the context of personal productivity, I'm looking at this as a little bit higher level than say, just the everyday decisions that we're making. But you could potentially use some of this heuristic Lee for those lower level decisions as well more in the moment types of decisions, but say that we have goals and objectives. And those are always based on values as I've come to understand it. And so the values can be very simple values, that is use the coffee example, again, I don't want cream and sugar, or I want the coffee to have cream and sugar, it's a value statement, very low level value statement. The other level is could be very high level values, right? You don't believe in, you know, killing things. So therefore, you may decide that you are against some particular value system that does kill things. And so you could say, Okay, well, if this outcome is going to kill butterflies, I'm not going to do this thing that's going to ultimately lead to killing butterflies. So we have we have varying levels of values that we place on those goals and objectives or the or the effort to get there. We then have a variety of different options, we need to deal with options that come across in making a decision. So you know, two options, you have one option, then the decision is whether or not to do that thing or not. So that's the binary, you have two options. Now you have technically three, right? You could you could decide to do nothing, or do a or b, and then and then so forth. And so keeps multiplying. In that sense, we have to think about the outcomes and the consequences of our decisions. And we have to think about are our trade offs. Are we willing, based on our values, or unwilling to make trade offs for reaching that particular value that particular goal or objective based on the decision?



Art Gelwicks 09:52

I think one of the things that we're hitting on right now that you're breaking out here is that when we think about these bigger decisions, first, we have to define where the bigger decision falls, because a lot of the the almost moral level and deeper requirements on a decision have to be bracketed, because if you try to wrap them into everything, for example, I'm going to get a cup of coffee, but I will only get I will only drink fair trade coffee because of this, well, that's going to drive your decision. The question is, is that is that weighty of an evaluation applicable for that level of decision? It starts to it starts to really get complicated. So I would say the first thing you have to kind of do is have almost a mental scale, as to where's the impact of this decision? Is it going how much of a difference is going to make between I'm going to get a cup of coffee, I'm going to buy a new computer, I'm looking into a car and I know these are all material purchases. But the same thing applies that to non material things. I'm looking at a house, you know those those hierarchies and that structure, it increases the complexity. But I don't think it changes the dynamic of the decision making process.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 11:09

In the context of of indecision, I want to make sure that we are in the space of I gave a poor example of buying coffee. And so we've kind of gone down that road. But let's let's take it back and say if I need to get a task done. And my decision to get that task or project done is hinged upon my decision to do it, or a series of decisions that need to be done and I'm not doing those things. We would maybe call that procrastination, but maybe it's not there yet. It's just that the point of I need to make a decision. And I feel stymied in making that decision. I'm not necessarily procrastinating, I'm struggling with making the decision. So it's from that perspective. And so I don't want for listeners, we're not talking about morality or moral implications of decision making. That's a whole other space and time and very complex topic. But specifically within the personal productivity space, it's it really comes down to do I do this thing and what's the path that I'm going to take to get there? And I think those are the two pieces where most indecision



Art Gelwicks 12:16

crops up for us. I agree with you. I think that a lot of this comes from that. But what I think when you take it back to its more basic thing, indecision comes from the fear of making the wrong decision taking the wrong path. You most people will look at the if we talk about it, like a fork in the road, which way am I going to go? The choice that's being made is less about where's the right direction, it's making sure that you're not going the wrong direction. And that's what I think paralyzes so many people it's paralyzes people would

paralyzes organization, organizations it paralyzes teams, and taking it out of the material thing, if you if you're looking at a group or a team working on a project, trying to make a struggle, Dzierzic decision, it is much more difficult to get people away from this fear of not making the right decision to the acceptance of they might make the wrong decision. It sounds a little bit weird. But when you when you unpack that, it almost makes sense.



Augusto Pinaud 13:17

I agree with what card says that's exactly part of the problem is you have all these universe of possibilities. And instead of for big part, in part because of the fear of make the wrong choice. Okay, what if this is not the most important, then what happened is nothing move. So you go from instead of picking one to know, to move forward, you go to Okay, I'm going to assign everything non important category because I don't know which one to pick. And then what that tend to start creating is a negative snowball effect where you know, all the things start getting overwhelming, overwhelming, overwhelming. And there is a moment where people pull simply shut down. And when the shutdown happened, people wonder why how can I can make a decision? No, no, it's not you can or cannot, it is now how can you work to want to slow down but to get it to the point where you can look and doesn't matter. Sometimes it's better to make a poor decision on the task than a no decision at all. And I think that's a concept that tends to escape from people's hand.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 14:32

So if we go from the place of fearing making the wrong decision, I wanted to take a step back and talk a little bit about some of the theories and methods for decision making to give some more kind of meat to that side of it. Because I think that even when we're dealing with indecision, there are some really good methods out there. And it may just be that you don't know what you don't know. And so not knowing these theories and methods, it's not giving you a roadmap for being able to make forward progress. So just wanted to touch base on this. And I'm I'm open to other questions and other other methods that you gentlemen have, and we can kind of go from there. The first one is probably the most famous and the most scientifically rigorous, which is system one and system to thinking. And anyone who's ever written anything by Dr. Daniel Kahneman. He's the author of Thinking Fast and Slow. But as a behavioral economist, he has really laid the framework for how people think about thinking and decision making today based on his and Dr hemispheric escape. So the idea here is that system, one thinking is our more gut instinct are more seat of our pants responses that our brain does. And then the slower faculties the things that we deliberate over our system to thinking. And so we vacillate between those two types of thinking. And to a great extent, there's actually even some

research that shows that some decisions that we make are based on both of those things. And some research says that we, we, in essence, we make a decision emotionally, and then we provide justification for it in our system to thinking for what decision we just made. So we have this ongoing movement between, let's call it the logical, rational part of our brain and the emotional part of our brain. And between those two places, is, is where we need to negotiate agreement. And that's going to create, what I think a good is a good decision, it's when we choose to only be logical or choose to only be emotional, that our decisions then start to corrode and start to become poor.



Art Gelwicks 16:53

Now, I think people may struggle with putting that architecture into use. But if it's something that you find yourself in a role that is responsible for making a lot of decisions, that type of system, one system to approach can be very helpful in for lack of a better term, systematized your decision making process,



Raymond Sidney-Smith 17:12

right. And this is where we can actually take this forward into a more practical space. So I was going to talk about this later in the episode. But I think this is an appropriate time now, which is I think we've talked about six thinking hats before and Dr. Edward de Bono. And I'll put a link to the past episode that we talked about this on in the show notes. And the idea here is that it is a series of six different hats. And they are different modalities. And which we are thinking, right organizing is the blue hat, you have the yellow hat, which is positive framework, and then you have green and white hat, which is just the facts. And so you have these various hats that you can put on. And while who uses this as a facilitation framework, I think about it from the perspective of how do I facilitate myself through a good decision. And that could be a planning process, where I'm walking myself, say through the Getting Things Done natural planning model, and I want to be able to think about things in all the various ways. And David Allen has created the very useful project planning triggers list. But I also want to actually think about those things from different perspectives. What are the negatives, I want to put my black hat on and think, well, what could be the worst thing that could happen here? And then I want to think, is, I think it's yellow hat, I want to think yellow hat, I was like, well, what's the rose colored glasses view of this, what's the best things that could happen out of this. And by facilitating your way through that, you're actually understanding better what system one and system two thinking is that you're doing? That is you're working your way through the various emotional and logical steps that your brain takes. And it really doesn't matter which of the hats you do in which order, I like to do them in specific orders, but I don't think

you have to. So I'll put, like I said, I'll put a link to that in the show notes. And folks can look at it. But I think that's one very practice. As you said, it's a little too high level to think about system one and system two, without having a framework. And I think the Banos method gives us a little bit of framework there that can be useful. There are several other decision scientists that are out there think about decisions from very different perspectives. There was one particular scientist who thinks about decisions that she calls robust decisions. And these are decisions that we would make, notwithstanding the outcome, we have high confidence in making the decisions. And she gives the example of putting on your seatbelt. You're not expecting to have a car crash when you get in the car. But you put on your seatbelt as a precautionary measure. And full well, knowing that it could happen. And it's a good decision to make right put on your seatbelt. And you don't have to have the risk of getting a driving violation, more importantly, is that if you're in an accident, you have a much higher likelihood of survival. And so therefore putting on your seatbelt is appropriate and what she calls a robust decision. And this is very interesting to me that the idea of robust decisions, you know, you send your kids to college, because you presume that they're going to have a better life, by having gotten an education, we make these types of robust decisions. That is we don't know what the outcomes are. But we make a best guess, at what those things are put to put money into a bank account, that is FDIC insured, because with the federal backing, we have confidence that will go back to that bank and be able to get our money out. You know, we make these kinds of robust decisions every day. And they are founded on uncertainty, but we still have a high level of confidence in making them. And so that's the whole idea behind robust decisions. And this takes me kind of to my other two theories that I came across, which is the uncertainty construct, which is heuristics. How do you make this when there are unknowns as to risk and other kinds of factors. And then when you know all the risks, then it just ends up being what they call expected utility theory, that is, you know, the risks. And therefore, you do what is expected to bring you the best benefit for the costs. And so it ends up being a very rationalist perspective to making decisions. So there are some really interesting academic and non academic models that we can lean on. And there's the Pew matrix, which is a really interesting decision model. I'll put a link to that in the show notes as well. So we have a lot of different decision making models out there. That is not to say that even with those models, you won't be able to that you'll be able to just all of a sudden overcome indecision, you may still have indecision, and that's what we're going to talk about next. But I do like everybody to know that there are usually models out there. For example, if I know someone who's in a similar situation as me, I will reach out to them and say, Hey, have you made this decision? And why did you make that and get their feedback so that I then can make a better decision because I'm I'm walking in the path of someone who was already, you know, broken through the forest. And that well worn path, so to speak, is easier for me, I have greater confidence in the success of getting to the goal or outcome that I want to based on understanding folks who are in similar situations, get to

get to a result, similar or akin to what I'm looking for.

A

Art Gelwicks 22:38

Yeah, I have one basic thing. I tell people who, when going through a decision making process, one figure out what's the worst thing that can happen to figure out what's the likelihood of that worst thing happening? And three, how can you mitigate it? If that worst thing happened, go through those steps. And once you once you go through all that? I hate said it, but it's like the old hard sell and selling. If I eliminate all the other issues and prices, the only concern, will you buy it today? Well, if I eliminate all these other issues, and it just comes down to saying yes or no, will you make a decision right now? That to me, that's the mechanical part of this, to be able to say, okay, we're naturally going to run down that rabbit hole of terrible things could happen. If I make this decision incorrectly great, then what are they put them on the table, make a list, write them down somewhere and figure out for everything that could possibly happen there? What's the likelihood of that happening? And what can you do to either prevent it or fix it after the fact. And once you've gone through all that, at some point, you just got to say, Okay, I've got it covered, as close as I can. This is the decision I'm going to make it goes to the old boy scout motto, be prepared thinking through all the possibilities and say, Okay, this is, at some point, I pretty much got it covered. Now I'm going to make a choice. And I know that when I make this choice, and this bad thing happens, I've already thought it out. And I'm ready for it to occur. Yeah, you will still have a likelihood of of some random weird thing occurs based on a decision you make, you can't that's called life. But if you're able to go through and get yourself comfortable with relatively quickly saying, Okay, if I do this, what's the worst thing that can happen? Well, worst thing is that such and such a person will get upset, great, then I can go talk to them and talk them down and we'll be fine. If that's the worst case, then make the decision. But don't sit there worrying that Oh, that bad thing could happen. So I can't decide to I hundred percent sure that it won't, because you'll never be you'll never get to 100%



Raymond Sidney-Smith 24:40

act first and ask for forgiveness later.

A

Art Gelwicks 24:45

Yeah, well, you know what, though, that is a really important thing, especially nowadays, we have gotten to the point where we are, we are paranoid. But in corporate corporate world is terrible for this. wind up paranoid over if I do something even slightly wrong, one

that's going to look terrible on me and negatively impact me and all kinds of bad things are going to happen. So decisions don't happen unless they go through 14 levels of review and eight sign offs and four different revisions. And it's you know what? Send it out. If you follow project management, agile and lean methodologies, one of the core principles is fail fast, make, you know, make a decision, do something, try it. If it doesn't work, revise it, try something else. But if we never take that initial step, if we never make that decision or choice, we're never going to know if we were right or not.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 25:36

So I think we've we've squarely landed now into some of the areas where indecision befalls good people. And what you were just talking about is a little bit of probably bureaucracy. The other side is catastrophizing. And so while I could, I can easily say a solution is to reduce bureaucracy, that's likely not going to happen anytime, say in an enterprise environment, there's just going to be strata that you're going to have to deal with. But certainly in terms of the your personal control of your world, I think that is your locus of control. The idea there is to catastrophizing is to create a breeding ground for indecision. And so I think certainly people need to remember that, if this is something that is going to cost life or limb, then obviously don't do it. Everything else, you have an opportunity to just like stop, drop and roll, you have an opportunity to pause, take a deep breath, make the cost benefit analysis, and then decide an act. And you need to really just do those things in that order. And you will then get to another fork in the road where you'll be able to then correct course. And I was just recently watching something and I can't remember it. And if I do remember it, I'll put it in the show notes a link to it. But they were talking about Warren Buffett and high level executives and other folks who have made really great forecasts. And what they determined was, the reason why they were able to make really great forecasts was they did micro forecasting. That is they made short term forecasts. And then they made another short term forecast. And then they adjusted. And so they made all these kinds of micro for passing and micro adjustments along the way. And that led to better outcomes. That is Warren Buffett is now one of the richest people on the planet, right? So the idea here is to either decide for some decisions that instead of not making a decision, make a small incremental decision that gets you moving in a direction. And then you can make small changes along the way. And I understand that sometimes there's a pivotal moment, a pivotal decision, where once you go in a direction, you can take a step back from that ledge, so to speak, once you once you dive right, it seems like a small decision, jump off the cliff. But once you've jumped off the cliff, there aren't really many other options.



Augusto Pinaud 28:01

Yes, I think you made a really important point, the micro decision, you know, there is a significant amount of people, okay, who are looking right now into every decision is final fatal on forever. Okay, instead of considered, yeah, you know, what, even if the little decision may not be perfect, it's better to go and take those micro plans and micro decisions, and then move forward and go adjust in that way. And I think one of the problems I see many times, you know, as a coach is, well, where do you want to go? I don't know. Okay, how about where do you want to go tomorrow? Well, I want if I make a mistake, and I tried to explain to people, you know, when you think on a plane, who goes from Los Angeles to New York, that plane is out, of course, around 90% of the time, and it is true micro adjustments on decisions arrived from point A to point B, a lot of people that I work with, it's clear where the B is, or at least some kind of clear where b is the problem is they are afraid that any decision they take will take them far away from from that point and therefore make they fail making those decisions that at the end of the day, yeah, prove them, right. prove them that Yeah, we are far now that what we were six months ago, and I say well, okay, but what decisions has made you to move you forward? Well, I don't know which decision I'm making some making none. So it is important to understand it is about those little little decisions. You know, that's that's where it is where the key comes from, you know, what are you going to do to really make those many decisions? What are you going to do to make sure that you make one and then you make the other one, you know, when I work with people and I coach with people, I tell them my job here is to help you create a small changes that are going to produce big impact. That's all because it is the combination and the cumulative effort of those small things that are going to make you get there. You know, when when we talk about you know, we talk specifically, for example, we bring a getting things done example to methodology from David Allen. Okay, I have an accountability program. Okay, we can come and do I can sit with you during your weekly review, and I will knock you on a text. Okay. Hey, are you doing your weekend review today? And I'm available for questions. What happened was that it's not that I'm doing nothing really, it's not that I'm not what I'm doing is giving you that is small change, you're not escaping that because you know, you are now going to have maybe not the best weekly review you ever had. But you are going to have our weekly review. And what you discover is when you have 345 in a row now that is start making that difference now that it started giving you that massive power that you did not have before.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 31:01

So what I hear you saying of gusto is that by virtue of making sometimes small decisions that lead to maybe not the best outcomes, that gives you some data to work with, that

then allows you to iterate and to get better and better over time and making better decisions and therefore, performing better based on kind of monitoring the past decisions, past performance. And then evolving from there. There's, there's another aspect

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Art Gelwicks 31:29

to this, though I just while it's stuck in my head here, the little decision making is critical. I agree with a gusto completely on this, where I think most people get into their problems I'm going to use a pop culture reference for you here is most people do not have an infinity stone where they can sit down and look at 14 million possibilities. That's what they want. They want to see every possible permutation of the decision they're about to make to make sure they're making the absolute right one. But even going through that extra sighs they're missing the most important thing, even if you're 100% sure on what the decision is, you still have to make the decision, you have to take the action. And if you're doing little decisions, little adjustments, that is much easier than trying to make one giant course correction,



Raymond Sidney-Smith 32:16

you touch on a really important point there are, which is that so many people think that they can predict the future. And as I frequently say, you have control. And you have a view of maybe the next five minutes using Tony Robbins kind of perspective in the world. And that that comes from Tony Robbins. And I absolutely adhere to that you don't control the next hour, you don't control the next 24 hours, you really have control over maybe the next five minutes. That provides me at least with a level of humility, over so many things in my life. And some people choose to relinquish that to spirituality or other kinds of of external. But I just choose to say, I just don't control things beyond a certain timeframe, there's a time horizon, that literally makes it less and less within my control. And I think that's a really, really important point is, is kind of as a general rule of thumb, trying to control the future is futile, you know, making small incremental movements now, in hopes that the future will be better, I think is a better perspective. And that means that certainly you can have a good friend of mine who was who was as calculating as the day is light. And he knows how to play the chess of life. Like there's nobody else. And he can see everything three steps forward from everything that everybody else is going to do in his organization. The way he does that, though, is actually looking at past performance, he looks at it from an intuitive perspective. So he's not trying to forecast what people are going to do, based on some future set of circumstances, he always looks at what they have done in the past, and just expects them to do the same things in the future. And that has been a very enlightening kind of perspective for me, mostly because I don't try to anticipate what people are doing on the whole I mean, you know, like in personal

relationships and, and in team environments, I try to take what people are going to do on face value, and then prepare for reasonably what I expect to happen. And that has served me well. And it may not serve you well. So your mileage may vary. And by all means, I don't want the Infinity Stone. In arts reference I, I like I control enough of my world, I'm a control freak. So I control enough of my world that having a little bit of spice of life, having a little bit of the chaos and the mess of life is what keeps the life interesting. So I hope that perspective at least helps people who might feel though they need to have their finger on everything, and, and have everything pinned down in order to be able to be successful and be productive in their day to day life. And I don't think that's true, I think that you can sometimes have a junk drawer, and the rest of your life be completely fruitful and fun and



Art Gelwicks 35:18

fulfilling. Which reminds me I have to put clean out the junk drawer on my to do list.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 35:24

I do I do have a few spots in my office right now that needs to be processed, clarified and organized.



Augusto Pinaud 35:30

I lost the connection. I don't know what you guys were talking about.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 35:37

So So I want I want to talk about three more things. One I brought up earlier, but we kind of tangent it. So back on the topic of how do we overcome indecision when it comes to big decisions. For example, you have to do a project and there's a fork in the road, you could take one path, or you could take the other and one could lead to great success failure. The other could lead to great success or failure. But you don't know which one to take. What do you say to someone who has that question of I've got to make a really big decision. What do I do? Do I create a pro con checklist for each decision? Do I archetype some other framework? What helps them overcome indecision in those moments,



Art Gelwicks 36:23

I actually use a basic quadrant system to help people through this. I have in the upper left

hand corner, it's pro pro in the bottom, or I'm sorry, upper right is pro quo. Bottom, it's pro con, then it's con con con Pro. It's something like that anyway, you understand what I'm doing? What I'm looking for is to try and find what are the benefits of making this decision? What are the benefits of not making this choice? What are the detriments of making this decision? And what are the detriments of not making this choice and Bye, bye quadrant rank using this kind of quadrant layout, it puts it visually in front of you, especially if you're like in a meeting group and you put it up on a whiteboard, it's a great way to do it. Because then at that point, you can really start to get a feel as to is it heavily weighted one way or the other. It's a nice little basic mechanics. So



Raymond Sidney-Smith 37:19

I mentioned this earlier. And I always recommend this to folks who are coming across a fairly large decision. And it's a tool called the Pew matrix. And I'll put a link to this in the show notes to a sample. And many people use this in six sigma and many other methodologies. The idea is is that it helps give you a structured team based approach to making a decision. And while I won't get into the particulars of of the matrix itself, it just gives you an analysis of strengths and weaknesses pretty akin to what you're talking about art. It just gives you a format. And there's a wonderful little spreadsheet you can use. And it just helps you kind of outline the things that are important to moving forward with a particular project. And I find it to be very, very useful and helpful in kind of large decision making situations even when those situations are personal. The other side is akin to business planning, there is what's called a SWOT analysis, that is the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, strengths and weaknesses are internal, what are my strengths? What are my weaknesses? For my business? What are my opportunities and threats? Those are externalities? What are those external opportunities? What are those external threats to the business, and we then try to deal with that data Well, in terms of making a decision, and I like to use that personally as well. And again, using the David Allen perspective, I like to actually take the natural planning model method, we understand purposes and principles, we then brainstorm ideas, and then we organize an outline those ideas, and then we ultimately identify projects and actions. And so I will use the natural planning model method in line with something like the Pew matrix or identifying what the SWOT analysis of that particular project is, and say, Okay, well, am I actually the person with the right skills to do this project? Are my weaknesses going to be a detriment to me getting this project completed? And perhaps maybe, then does that mean I need to take a class? Do I need to learn how to program in this particular language? Do I need to educate myself about this particular construct before I go do this thing? And what are some of the outer level problems that I might experience the externalities, and what usually happens after I've done a really solid natural planning model session, and then I look at it from either SWAT or Pew, I make a robust decision to

go back to that kind of concept. I've at that point, I feel very confident in where my mind is going as it relates to whether or not I should do that, that thing. And if I don't, then I will park, that choice to give myself some time to think about it, because one of the things that we know is that once we have put all of the information we have on the table, our brain, then on an unconscious level, then does that problem solving for us, helps us come to decisions. So you need to either sleep on it, as they say, you need to give it some time to percolate until your brain comes up with a solution. And it may be doing something that you didn't otherwise think of before. But because you were so wrapped up in the particulars, of not knowing how you felt about particular things, you weren't able to actually come to a decision. So I really liked the idea of doing a little bit more planning, and then setting it aside for some very specific amount of time, I'm going to re address this in three days or after the weekend. And usually by the time I come back to it, I have a pretty clear vision of what needs happen. And indecision has all motivated two more two more big ticket, indecision pieces that I seem to come across, in just everyday people asking me about these things. One is decision fatigue. I know a lot of executives, who, because of their work requires them to make decisions all day long. And they're making not just small decisions, but company or organization level decisions. And they just feel not overwhelmed. But in essence, they feel ego depletion and Dr. Baumeister terms, but in essence, they're they're not feeling like they can make any more decisions because they've run out of, they've run out of steam, they run out of energy. What do you say to folks who have some level of decision fatigue, and still need to make decisions to move their maybe personal projects or personal tasks forward, when they're making very large macro decisions for organizations all day long?

A

Augusto Pinaud 41:55

You know, one, one of the things that I have found working with was those people's is because of the amount of decision they need to make, okay, they tend to get propped up into those decisions and start eating into their time to really put some of those things into perspective. You know, the time for reflection, it's, it's starting to go to go down, you know, and, and it is something that it is interesting when you work because if you ask them, I said no, I have the time. But then as we go and get into the nitty gritty and the details to discover, oh, yeah, well, I used to have the time I know I don't have it anymore. Because the problem is not that they are making this constantly making high level decisions. The problem is, at some point, they get disconnected. Okay, from that time to to reflect to understand where are they, in the whole scheme of big priority things are moving. Ok. And now that reflects the decisions born into reactions more than decisions? Yes, their expertise allows them to make better reactions, but they're still have are disconnected from that time to think and to reflect. So this decision process, it's more effective and help them better.



Art Gelwicks 43:21

Yeah, for me, it's actually that most of the time the people who are making those decisions are getting asked to make decisions too early in the process. Can you decide on this for me, you go to a leader of a group or something like that, and you're not giving them in any information. So that decision, they now have to go through the entire exercise of information gathering and processing, and analysis of benefit and cost and then go through and make the decision what I tell people all the time and say look, if you want somebody to make a decision, make it so it's just a yes or no, do the legwork, gather the information, analyze it, put the benefit and cost together, put together the options, put together three options as to what could be the deciding factor, have one that's recommended. And then just make it get down to a yes or no, the person who has to make that decision is going to appreciate that fact. Unless you know, for the most part, most people do appreciate the fact that you've set that up for them. But also, it's going to make sure that the decision that gets made is the one that you want to be on target with executing and you are most likely to be comfortable executing, the worst thing you can do is go ask somebody to make a decision and they decide on something you were completely unprepared for. Why? Because you didn't set him up to be successful in that decision making process. Yes, I know, decision makers typically get paid more than the non decision makers. But to be honest with you, you gotta make it easy. If you want to have the success of the decision that they're going to hit say it this way make you put into action.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 44:56

I agree with both of you on on that subject. And that leads me to my final question and kind of topic point in indecision is I see folks having the, the spousal disagreement, the team based disagreements. And so they are not only stuck in indecision, because they don't know what the appropriate thing is that they should do. But perhaps they as a group don't know what to do, because there was a misunderstanding or a conflict between what is the right decision as a group? How do you how do you deal with conflict oriented decision making, and that is, you know, negotiating people to create agreement to be able to then move things forward, because you can't be productive if, if you have a committee, and everybody thinks that they should be going in five different directions. And that's really that's really a non sequitur to the, the movement forward of that project. So what do you do? How do you consensus build? How do you deal with the gaining agreement with others on a direction and a decision, we could, we could do this topic for hours, because now you're delving in, and you're jumping into ideation, methodologies, and, and that kind of decision tree approach and value waiting. But if we, if we look at it something practical,



Art Gelwicks 46:22

and I'm going to take it out of the corporate space, like, you got a family of four people, and you're trying to decide where to go to dinner that night, which always seems to be a difficult decision to make. And everybody's has their own opinions, but often, they don't want to express their own opinions. What I recommend is, look, start eliminating things, you can't start just going through the list and saying, do you want to do this? And the answer is no, you want to do this? And the answer is no. Because at some point, the person who is making that list is going to get very frustrated because they're doing a lot of work that is only generating negative response. So work it backwards, start to eliminate things right away. Say, okay, pretty sure nobody wants to have training tonight, because we had Chinese two nights in a row. Correct. everybody's like, yeah, that's right. Cool. We got one off the list, not a problem, move on through the next one. And work from the easiest eliminations up to the more difficult, then you get to a point you're saying like, okay, here's the thing, we can do this, or we can do that one or the other. Everybody just say what you want to do. I don't care is not an answer, and then move from there. It's not easy. I wish there was an easy clear cut. This works every time. But there isn't. Because it's so much personal input, its personality, its mood. It's, you know, health at that given time, a lot of factors creep into play.



Raymond Sidney-Smith 47:42

I think you're I think you're spot on in terms of the various complexities of being able to deal with people. And I think this is probably going to spur a whole separate episode at some point in the future for us to talk about how to really gain consensus how to how to do consensus building, both personal and professional life to be more productive. This has been really fascinating discussion, I think on the topic of indecision, and that is overcoming indecision. So with that. Do you have a question or 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 productivity cast.net forward slash 064. FYI, the episode URL is always productivity cast.net forward slash and the episode number of the three digit episode number there at the bottom of the page, feel free to leave a comment or question one of us will be glad to respond. Here at productivity cast.net forward slash 064. You'll also find the show notes with links to anything we've discussed, so that you can easily jump to them from the show notes, a transcript available on the page and as a PDF download. And you can also learn how to follow us from your favorite podcast app there on the website by clicking on the subscribe page link. Now, if you have another question about personal productivity, perhaps one that you you'd like us to tackle on a future episode, please visit productivity cast.net forward slash contact, you can leave a written message or record an audio message for us there on the page from your browser. Also, if

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Voiceover Artist 49:33

And that's it for this productivity cast. The weekly show about all things productivity with your hosts Ray Sidney Smith and a goose to pronounce with Francis Wade and art gallery