

Voiceover Artist 0:00

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 Sidney-Smith and Augusto Pinaud with Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 0:17

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

Augusto Pinaud 0:24

Raymond Sidney-Smith 0:17

Welcome back everybody to ProductivityCast the weekly show about all things personal productivity, I am Ray Sidney-Smith. I am Augusto Pinaud. And welcome to our listeners to this episode today on ProductivityCast. We are interviewing someone most often quoted for saying your mind is for having ideas not holding them. We have the honor and privilege of speaking with David Allen, author of getting things done the art of stress free productivity, and the revised edition was published in 2015, among other works and his eponymous GTD methodology. Welcome, David.

David Allen 0:45

Hi, Ray Augusto. Thank you. Thanks for the invitation.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 0:48

No problem. We're what we wanted to talk about today was a chronological movement through GTD and your world. What we're gonna do is we're gonna first talk a little bit about the past. That is you getting things done the art of story Stress Free productivity around 1998. It was published in 2001. And I'm just really curious about this. What was your experience? What was it like for you to, in essence codified something that was, and it's supposed to be axiomatic. These are supposed to be enduring principles, but they're also unique in the way that every person kind of invests in them in their own life and work. How did you decide on how to position that for yourself in the book?

David Allen 1:23

Well, actually, it all came right out of out of 25 years. You know, I started doing versions of this work in 1981 82. Before you guys are born, probably. And so it was really more out of thousands of hours I spent both in the training and executive coaching field and world with this methodology, you know, the first decade or so really, really identifying it and refining it, and then you're spending an awful lot of time delivering and developing and continuing to refine The methodology itself, but the basics of it really haven't changed even since then. So I knew what I was writing about what I didn't know how

was to how to put it in a book. So that was a that was a challenging experience. It was funny, almost becoming an alcoholic writing a book about the stress free productivity. Because you know that I tried to write the book, like I gave seminars and keynote speeches, and it doesn't work that way. Books, very different media for people to engage in. So that's why it took four years from the time I pulled the trigger in 97, to start actually formulating the book. So I didn't have any problem understanding the value and the bullet and the bullet proof of it. But it did take me 25 years to figure out what I'd figured out, and that it was unique and nobody else seemed to have done it the same way. And that it was bulletproof, because it stood the test of going viral inside of some of the most challenging organizations. You could imagine. That it would that it would stick in. And so I knew at work, I just didn't know quite how to put it into a book. So that was that was that was a big challenge at that point.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 3:10

So you think that the experience working with others with the with the material was actually what helped you have the kind of fortitude to know that it could be translated?

David Allen 3:19

Oh, yeah, absolutely. And, and, you know, come on, the strange paradox of getting things done is that people are most attracted to it. The people who take to it the most are the people who need it the least. They're already the most productive, organized, systemic, systemic people you could ever meet. They're the most creative. It's just that they, most of those people that get attracted to this, their own creativity has just outrun their own ability to keep up with it. And so they find themselves up to their own limits, and they know they could produce more value if they had more space. And so they are attracted to this because, well, for whatever reason, the cool The cool thing about that is I've got the hang with some The best, brightest and busiest people you'd ever meet on the planet and spent literally, you know, Malcolm Gladwell talks about 10,000 hours, I probably spent 50,000 hours, literally, desk side with folks like that. So, you know, once you've had that level of experience, there's not a whole, you can't punch a hole in this stuff. You know, you kind of really know it work because it works. In variably. Over all of those years, anybody who implemented any of this produced exactly the same result without fail, or control or focus, or space to focus on meaningful stuff. So by that time, I had enough confidence because I'm not a kind of guy. I'm sort of introverted and I'm not ever really motivational speaker. I'm really more an educator and then then researcher about this than anything else. And so I had to feel real, real confident that you know, that 25 years of my life work, I was going to put, you know, sort of put it out there open source into the public. So, anyway, so that that's a short version of a very long story.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 4:58

Yeah. And so on the on the personal productivity level, there's that level. And then there's the organizational productivity space and organizational structure. And I know that you have some history with holacracy. And so I'm actually really curious about your background in holacracy. From my bit of research, you met Brian Robertson of holocrazy, one at the conscious capitalism conference, and you decided to bring holacracy to the David Allen company. And for folks who maybe don't know what holacracy is, if you can give us kind of like the mini definition, and then what did you learn from investing in holacracy? in the organization?

David Allen 5:36

Oh, that's a big question. I mean, there's a lot of a lot of answers to that. So I could spend for a while but I'll try to. I'll try to give you the soundbite of it anyway, part of what holacracy is, was Brian Robertson sort of gotten religion with GTD and said, How do I create that in my organization? Because I can be real clear, and you can be real clear, but as soon as we have an organizational structure, you know, that increases complexity exponentially. And so Brian said Okay, how do we create organizational mind like water? How do we get organization as clear, as GTD creates clarity for an individual? How do we do that, organizationally, and very, very similar modality, really, they'll have to hand it to Brian, he, he's kind of from another planet, he was he spent a lot of time creating quite a rigorous structure, which was, which was quite which worked, really did work. And so, and I was about to, I was about to give up my company because of the stress factor and, you know, saying, why can't this company sort of run itself? Because I'm not the best player for the play in terms of being a CEO or trying to manage people. That's not my, I'm not particularly interested in it, and I'm not really good at it. I made a bad hire of previously of someone that I thought could do that and it didn't work out very well and that was quite painful. And so That's when I said, Okay, let me see if I can learn how to run an organization myself. And so deep dive into studying. Okay, what are all the books you're supposed to read? And what, what's all that stuff? And then I, when I heard Brian speak on stage, I went, Oh my God, that's exactly what I was looking for. And it turned out he was big fanboy of mine. So, you know, we kind of got together. And, you know, was one of those, you know, the strange paradox of implementing self organization, I had to be quite dictatorial. I had, I had to, I had to sort of essentially legislate because I was going to follow the company if we didn't find something like that. Because I was in the process of, I don't know, all the stuff that was going on, but there was an awful lot of stuff going on and I, I hated to be pulled down into the weeds. You know, it's kind of running an organization was forcing me to do. So that's another short version of a very long story. So I went we went in full bore. I think we were I think Brian would probably tell you I think we were the probably the first company when we were only 50 people at the time. But I think we

were the first company to fully, totally integrate holacracy not just some piece of it wasn't an experiment. It was a we're on. It was an experiment. And I even back then, as I wrote the foreword in Brian's book, I said, this is a good five year project. I knew at that time was going to take that long to find out how this work if it really worked, because it was such an operating system change, you know, for an organization that you couldn't tell overnight whether it was really worked in, although from almost the very first implementation, the first sort of taster governance meeting that Brian and his partner Tom Thomason, you know, came out to California where we were at the time and they ran us, our leadership team through a governance holacracy governance meeting, and we just blew us all the way. So there was a lot that we learned almost immediately about how to use Create space to, to surface tensions in an organization and get them resolved, you know, in the most appropriate way without, you know, it's kind of distributed authority was also distributed stress. Okay, so Okay. Everybody experienced what I've been experiencing in terms of being accountable for what happens in the company and how it goes.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 9:23

That's one way to create stress free productivity is to distribute it. Alright, I'm going to turn this over to Cousteau. Let's dig into some GTD stuff.

Augusto Pinaud 9:33

Your book introduced a weekly review as one of the important components and it's also one of the most challenging things to consistently do in the Getting Things Done methodology. It seems like we're terrified to look at our projects on our life. In my own experience, I have come and split the Get Clear, Get Current and Get Creative, because I have discover that that's helped me keep the mental energy that I require to finish a good weekly review. Otherwise what happened is my mental power runs out at the end of get current that I never get to get graded. But you have said I tried to make the next action decision when I am smart. So when I'm completely dumb, I can make a smart things or I may me me misquoting you but but something along those lines why it's so exhausting and taxing. This process of the weekly review, when really well done or properly done, is released. So much energy

It requires thinking thinking is tough. Ask any writer. No, you have to you have to think okay, so don't do it. Then what are you doing, man? You're trying to do a weekly review all the time and never finishing? Right? That's why I say I think about once a week. You know, because when I think I sit down and really think think this stuff through I'm smart, I make good creative decisions. I parked stuff at appropriate places. So the rest of the week. I don't have to think that much. I just Do that. But then I have to you know, within about seven days, I better think again, because by doing is kind of gotten out of shape and it's not it's not current anymore and other

things have shown up and so, in order to trust the system the system has to be complete and current. So, your mind cannot let go less than trust that the system is better than it is. It cannot. So for the system to be better than your mind, their system is better be It better be better than your mind. Most people get some stuff out of their head and feel a little bit better, but they never really get there because they don't trust either their head or their system anymore. And it's very easy to fall off the GTD wagon very fast. Because as soon as your list are not complete, you're going to feel like it's too much trouble to keep it up. So you're going to try to stack stuff back in your head again, and you're off. The nice thing is it's very easy to get back on. All you got to do is sit down and do a weekly review. Get your head clear And to your point Augusto I understand that what you should not do is assume that the weekly review is the time to catch up with email a good friend of mine, pretty sophisticated guy. He does his, he cleans up all his backlog of email and everything else on a Thursday night. So that when he starts Friday morning, that's when he does his weekly review. He starts with a pretty clear clean deck so you can see things from a whole different level.

Yeah, that's that's a part of the reason I separate that what I called it, what do you call to Get Clear, because of that allows me to plow through most of that. So when I come to Friday morning, for that weekly review, it's not that I don't have but I have maybe, you know, they they and a half or less of input that I need to process so their brainpower gets much stronger when I get to that, you know, Get Creative part. And allow me to think through otherwise I don't have the mental power to go through a whole weekly review to think that much if if, if I you know, use your words on that, but it is a component on how much exhausting is To think, or it's also a component of fear of losing everything that you have on your world.

But you can only do one thing at a time. And so you know, this is one of those is the glass half empty or half full. You're feeling either feeling really terrible and terrified about all this stuff you're not doing or you're just feeling really comfortable about talking to me right now in this podcast is exactly what you need to do given everything else that are options in your world. It's like looking at the menu. You know, you don't eat everything on the menu. It just kind of picked what I want to what I want to take off the menu to do and so all these lists, and all of that stuff that you're looking at are just menus of options about things to do. And if you think you could do them all now, you're just spoiled, you know? So there's a there's a big cure for that. It's called get older.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 13:48

When you have fewer summers ahead than then summers behind right. The goal I think, that you talked about of thinking once per week, do you think that the engaging process like when people are engaging That

type of thinking is different than the type of thinking they have to do when they're in that planning mode. In the weekly review, like how do you see the the doing part and thinking as it relates to doing and engaging in your work?

Augusto Pinaud 14:13

Well, actually, the thinking it just says is, you know, come on, let's let me quote the late great Peter Drucker, the biggest challenge for knowledge workers is defining what your work is. So the thinking process that the emails don't tell you their junk. Nor does junk mail tell you it's a junk, you actually have to decide it junk. So you actually have to empty your mailbox and go, Oh, that's junk, or, oh, that's kind of cool. Or what's that, then you're thinking all the time, in a way, can't stop thinking. But what you want to do is you want to finish defining what your work is, defining what your commitments are. So that then you can look at the whole Gestalt kind of at any point in time, and then renegotiate. Wow look at all this stuff. I'm not doing right now I'm going to have a nap or a beer. And then those are power naps and power beers. Right? Because look at how many things you decided they were better than. Right? But again, that's why just getting used to this, it takes a while for people to really get used to being conscious. Sorry. You know, you know, people get mad at me for their list. I've excuse me, that ain't my list. That's your list, right? Your choices? Where do you want to keep track of it? You want to keep it in your head where it bangs around and wakes you up at three o'clock in the morning about stuff you can't do anything about? Or do you want to externalize it so that you're not spinning around remembering and reminding and trying to prioritize all that stuff. So you what you want to do is free up your mind so that you're using strategic intuitive intelligence, to decide which errand to run to decide what to talk to your life partner about to decide out of all these lists. What is the best thing to do so that thinking you never stop? What you want to do is free yourself up to that level of thinking. So that's what I'm doing all the time is deciding. Now this is now the best thing to do if I can do it and that's, you know, I, I kind of make a joke about it call I don't I can just, you know, when I'm smart, I make decisions about stuff. And then I'm reminded to do smart stuff, even when I'm kind of dumb and thick. Though there is a truth in that. I don't have to keep rethinking what do I need to do about x, I've already decided what to do about x. I just need to decide whether to do that or not, versus all the other options that I have. So what you want to do is free your thinking up to be doing that kind of thinking, as opposed to spinning about thinking about what I should be thinking about how to be thinking about things I should be thinking about how to be thinking about what I need to be thinking about what I need to be thinking about and you never finish that exercise. Just walk around in eggs.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 16:48

There are a lot of neurotics and being one of them I know what that

feels like.

Augusto Pinaud 16:55

So took me years David to to really understand that they A lot of the power of the elements of getting things done are really counter intuitive. Did you were that aware? Or can you elaborate more on that counter intuitive nature of the things of the Getting Things Done? And maybe the thinking is counter intuitive? I don't know. But the label comes to mind. I remember, you know, many years ago when I got the first Labeler, it didn't make any sense when you explain that on the book or the audios or any material. But it really make a change is completely counterintuitive. Unlike that the two weekly, the two minute that there's so many things inside of the components of getting things done that are completely counterintuitive, and their power comes exactly there.

David Allen 17:39

It was never counterintuitive to me. So I think I understand what you're saying. A lot of people think why would it? You know, why would a labeler make so much difference? say well, do you ever have you ever tried to labeler ever seen what it looks like when you label a file as opposed to the handwriting?

Augusto Pinaud 17:57

Now I have

Augusto Pinaud 17:58

Yeah, I go. So you know, what's counterintuitive about that? Like, it's like, you know, like eating good spaghetti. You know, cooking is counterintuitive, oh my god spend all that time to make something good is going to disappear in 10 minutes. So yeah, it's worth it to make that 10 minutes really delicious. So I suppose that's what you mean by counterintuitive. But you know, probably the most counterintuitive thing is that you need to pay appropriate attention to everything that has your attention, even what you consider not so important stuff. Because if you don't pay appropriate attention to those things, they will start to take more of your attention than they deserve. As soon as you tell yourself in your head, you need cat food more than once you're inappropriately engaged with your cat. Right? So it's not so much about getting things done. It is about getting things done, but it's really more about appropriately engaging with all of your commitments in life. And so, appropriate engagement means you've got to identify them, clarify what to do about them and organize the results of that thinking. Otherwise, that small little dorky stuff starts to take wind out of your sails and reduce your optimal ability to really focus appropriately on the most important things. So, yes, that is, I understand that is somewhat counterintuitive, because people well, wait a minute, let's get to the important stuff. Let's get organized and say, Well, yeah, well, we live we need to set priorities ago. Well, tell me all your options. Well, I don't know

what all my options are that let's Why don't we start there. Sometimes the smartest thing to do is go buy cat food. Because your brain is toast. Even the small stuff I call the magic in the mundane, sometimes just doing the dorky little things that you got to do. You know, I just created 20 or 23 Two Minute Tips for turbulent times. I don't know if you guys have seen that yet on our GTD YouTube channel. But you know, some of those things are like Hey guys, just come fix and finish something. Just walk around and you can do in two minutes haven't changed the damn lightbulb. Jesus. Why? How are you gonna walk by go car we'll put the light bulb in How often does that door squeak before you should just go get some wd 40 and spray that sucker. You know, sometimes just just stuff like that, that sometimes just those little things, get you back in the driver's seat again and get your energy up. So then you're ready to tackle the ugly email you need to respond to it, or whatever the or the business plan you need to grapple with.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 20:20

I wanted to go a little bit deeper here into some more theoretical GTD stuff here. Having been steeped in your material since the book came out in 2001. I picked it up off a bookshelf in a Barnes and Noble and I've been a, you know, a convert and an advocate and a practitioner ever since. And there are some folks like Professor Cal Newport, who have been a bit critical of GTD. He has this thing that he calls deep work, and he defines it as the ability to focus without distraction on a cognitively demanding task. These efforts create new value, improve your skill and are hard to replicate. And then he calls shallow work the opposite kind of non cognitive with just Typical distracted and minor duties, his notion that he thinks that GTD sees all work is equal. I'm frequently perplexed by the like misunderstanding of types of work and equal management of that work. And so my question is kind of twofold here in this vein, is all work equal in GTD and our next actions shallow work in newports. thinking, how do you rationalize the kind of definitions of things like deep work and shallow work versus the threefold model? Or just the idea of context based work and having context based actions lists?

David Allen 21:33

Well, I would challenge anybody to say, Okay, tell me the most strategic important deep work you need to do. What's your next action on that? And if you haven't decided what the next action is, you haven't finished you're thinking about what to do about whatever you think that deep work is. Now if the deep work is I need to sit down and meditate on this for an hour. Fabulous, great, or I need to draft ideas about X, Y, and Z. Fabulous. Believe me, I spent thousands of hours with some of the most senior Just to get the people you ever meet, having them, you know, get everything out of their head. And how many of those things actually it's a very strategic and important stuff has a less than two minute thing that they could do right then. But they just haven't decided what doing would look like. So fight

deciding what doing look like if you think that's a small thing Come on, that's how you live your life. Right? So it's not a small thing. You're doing all that you can't stop doing. Even if you sit down to do deep work, that's what you're doing. You're still doing using to make sure you're using it make sure you've got space to do deep work. Right? And I don't care I'm mindful you want to be if you need cat food keeps popping into your head. Why don't you just put that out and post it on the fridge? Right so that it's off your mind. See my critical driver is what do you need to do to get your head clear? Because I think deep work really happens best when you're when you're present. And you have a clear head. So whatever you need to do to get a clear head and if to get a clear head ignore cat food and ignore all that fine, I don't care. I'm not I'm not, I'm not a I'm not a proselytizer. I'm just giving you information. If you want to clear him, you better grab anything that's on your mind and get it off your mind. That's deep work, frankly. Was it getting yourself prepared for being spontaneous and being intuitive, being strategic,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 23:23

and this definitely affirms my beliefs on that notion. And I struggle with the term deep work all the time, I've actually re coined what I do as focused action sessions, just because of the notion that I don't like the idea of being in a place where I'm not moving things forward. And and if that means moving things forward is the mental hard work that needs to be done. That's fine. But the notion of deep work versus shallow work, as he said, like the next most strategic thing could be changed the light bulb, and that is a strategic progressive action toward an outcome. And so I I just struggle with that whole deep work shallower?

Augusto Pinaud 24:01

Well, we're on the planet from my experience, basically, for two critical things completion and creation. You need to be accountable for what you've put into motion. Call it karma, call whatever you want. But if you've made a commitment with yourself at any level, you will eat it unless you complete it or get get in control of it, whatever that is. And then you need to be accountable that once you get your head clear, because you you handle the completion side of things, then where do you point yourself? Where do you point where do you Where do you point your creativity? What are you doing? You know, so all comes down to those two things. So if you say deep work, you know, that's the deepest work you could do is complete everything that you've started and to be accountable for what you're creating and putting into motion. I don't think there's any deeper work than that. That may look like a lot of different things. It may look like changing a light bulb or it may look like you know, figuring out how to invent a light bulb. But I've never been able to do deep work without doing something like drafting or writing or mind mapping or doing something like that. You know, sometimes deep work happens while you're just on a walk, doing nothing. Doing nothing to me is one of

the most delicious things you could possibly do it because then you're really open to, for the universe to sort of give you all kinds of good ideas. Well, you never thought it before.

I know we you you and I met at a time where the Palm Pilot was still available and it still existed. And I always regret that that day, I did not challenge to a race on graffiti because I was pretty fast too. And I regret I did not challenge you then.

David Allen 25:46

Wouldn't it be nice to have the Palm Pilot again? I think that was oh man, the best list manager ever and it looks so good in a dark bar too. You know, so,

Augusto Pinaud 25:55

yeah, it was fantastic.

David Allen 25:58

Really, and that's simple. Little PC program that tied in these could sink your palm to the, to the to your PC. And that was that was so great. So easy.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 26:07

It was elegant.

Augusto Pinaud 26:08

It was a fantastic piece of software is super elegant and I. And I wonder, you know, we, when that piece came in really that was a translation of the traditional paper timekeepers, you know, to do have the calendar, you have the context, you have the notes on the task, and and a lot of limitations that I think to a certain extent they were good. But as technology has pushed, now the people is getting more into communication as if it's much it's harder to get the basics, the task, the notes. So those younger generations and I know you have worked with the most sophisticated people, but also a lot of younger people. How is this younger people now getting these devices who are ambiguous for them, but that are really more centering to communication, email, and the web and what challenges are there going to find? As they need to get getting things done and getting to know a methodology, like getting GTD to really move forward.

David Allen 27:07

Well, I've met tons of young people who are great GTDers, they get it, they find it really cool. I haven't found an age discrimination, or a gender discrimination or cultural discrimination at all. It's such a universal stuff. Anybody who's got a busy life, and likes the experience of having a clear head can use it and can implement it, and I see them do that. But it's, you know, as I say, it's for anybody but not for everybody. You know, you guys probably have more in common with, you know, 20 of the young people I know, here in Amsterdam that

are good GTDers than you do with your next door neighbor, your cousin. You know, it's a global event that's going on out there. And I think it's a global event. You know, the new addition, you know, Ray that you mentioned in 2015. The methodology didn't really change. I you know, kind of restructured some of my life. languaging about it. You know, I changed collect the capture, and I changed process to clarify and change, reflect to review, I mean, review to reflect. And so there was some just some sophistication that, you know, that in 15 years, I kind of added into that, but the main thing that changed was the audience. You know, when I first the first book was published, it was really targeted for the fast track professional, you know, maybe five to 10% of the people in the organizations really needed that and we're really underwater, and we're trying to get on top of it. And as you graduate up the scale it life doesn't get easier. So it was really, that was the targeted group. But in 2015 90% of the people in the organization need it not just 10% because nobody's holding anybody's hand anymore. Everybody's expecting everybody to manage themselves. Everybody's you know, going to need to manage themselves and you know, that's where the world is going. And interestingly, the pandemic has just just sped up exponentially what was going on anyway, which was the world was behind. Virtual people becoming self managed and had to and running their own businesses. Because that's just the way the world was going. But that boy, this just sped that up and like, like crazy. But back to your point, in terms of what's happened, I don't think anything significant has happened in the technology world in terms of productivity, since the word processor in the spreadsheet, you know, in relational databases, and kind of where all that came from everything else. There's been a huge increase in in the digital world. But what it's done is just speed up. It's added speed, and volume, and accessibility. So you just have a lot more stuff coming at you a lot faster. So it hadn't changed your world. It just made your world full of all kinds of options. And it's the stress of opportunity. That's, you know, creating a lot of stress out there. How many things could you guys be doing right now instead of talking to me, would be adding value to your life and your world and your projects and your things and you're coming And then all that stuff. So, you know, as I've made a point, often a crisis, kind of let you relax because it takes away all those options. If suddenly your building caught on fire guys, you wouldn't be worried about tires or your taxes or, you know, or brothers should get a divorce or not, you just want to get out of the building, right? The problem is, if you're not in a fire crisis, then all those other demons come running at you through the gate. Oh, my God, I can't do that. And I can do that. I can do that. Oh my god. So it's the stress of opportunity that has been, you know, that can be very much overwhelming given the current world of social media and all this stuff. ubiquity is, you know, updated, and that there's just so much available to everybody. Now, like all the time, you know, 24 seven. So that's the difference, I think is it just it's forcing people to have to get clearer about what matters. So that's the good news about so much stuff and so many

choices is like you don't have to decide What should you eat off that menu? What's gonna be the healthiest thing to eat, or the most fun to eat or the best thing to eat, you're gonna have to focus some more. So, you know, the ability to be able to focus, I think is still is still very much needed. And I don't I haven't seen an age discrimination about though.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 31:20

So we go from graffiti and the Palm Pilot. And I know you have your famed pocket notebook for capturing, but I'm curious, what is your everyday carry for productivity? What tools and software are you using to manage your systems lately? Like what are you using?

Augusto Pinaud 31:35

Well, I don't, I don't use my phone or even my iPad really for doing any work. I do use them for what they're good for, which is GPS and photographs. And, and, you know, read the New York Times, you know, when I'm waiting in line for something, so, you know, those are, those are great tools to have. I could see my lists on those distributed devices, but I'd much rather work at my 16 inch Mac Pro. You know, that I'm looking at right now. So that's when I work, I want to be in a work mode, I want to be at a place where I've got both all the stuff that I might need paper based wise I might want, might want to print something out, because it's a lot easier to edit that for my wife and hand edit on there the changes than to try to edit the PDF file, you know, etc. And so there's the ability to be able to just have my own workstation in my work cockpit. That's where the work happens. So I'm not working on all those other things. I'm, you know, come on, I don't have thumbs as fast as the millennials. So I guess they can do that. But frankly, it's just too small a screen. I want the ability to be able to finish a lot of things, especially if you're doing something like a weekly review, I want to I want to do that where I can get to the Web fast, because I may have a less than two minute thing just to look up somebody's website and kind of see what they're doing. And notice what's what's going on there. So, for a workstation, I want a workstation. Now, that's maybe that may be because I'll be 75 and December maybe I'm just an old fart You know, and so I'm, you know, I don't know how to do that otherwise, but I don't get it. I need visual space. I need physical space. You know, I I've been on a lot of podcasts the last two or three weeks people asking me about well, how working from home now what what's the best practice? What do we need to do? One of my first tips is get your own workspace and do what you need to do to set it up. So when you sit down there, you move into work mode. Right? And people see and you sit there No, you're in work mode. So as opposed to Gee, honey, could you please, which is what a lot of people are getting now because the kids are there and they're their life partners. They're, you know, and they're also they need to get work done, you know, in that environment, because I haven't worked in an office since 1981. So I'm scratching my head called so so what you know, yeah, you know, you need to you need to have your own work

environment. Anyway, that's more than what you asked her comment a moment. Thought I'd Rif

Raymond Sidney-Smith 33:57

No worries, no worries. I'm curious. Going back to GTD proper, I run the Getting Things Done meetups in New York and DC, and you have a wonderful community of folks who will be listening to this. And I'm sure they're all saying hi to you right now. But in in that sense, the the number one question I usually ask I get asked by folks is, in what order should someone new to GTD or in need of a refresher kind of start with your materials, you have getting things done itself, you have ready for anything, you know, from 2004, you have making it all work from 2008. I believe it is. And and then you have the new GTD workbook, which you published a couple of years ago. And so now, how did someone get started? Is it just one of them they should dive into? Should they go in another order than the publication chronology? Where should someone new jump in?

Augusto Pinaud 34:44

Probably probably if they're brand new to it, the work that's why we wrote the workbook. And again, I'm not an instructional designer, the getting things done the book is daunting. It's very easy for people just get freaked out when they Pick that book up because I put 25 years of my experience into that little book. I didn't hold back on anything. I put the whole model in there. And so I understand that it can be quite daunting for people to try to engage you just with that book though, though there are a lot of people did I mean, right? You probably did. You just picked it up and kind of went page by page and you know, had people literally pick it up and then go, oh, that took a weekend and implemented the whole thing. Just by reading the book.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 35:24

I'm in my 23rd reading of it.

Augusto Pinaud 35:27

That's that's a rare bird. 23rd. I hadn't heard that many yet. And it's a different book every time you read it. I'm sure.

That's what he's more surprising to me. I don't know if I have 23rd. But he says once it once a year, so 2000 for at least 16. So I need a different book every year. Yeah.

Yeah, it really is. And so I don't really know where to tell people to start, but that's why we wrote the workbook. And again, I'm not an instructional designer. I don't do that very well. As I said, it took 25 years to figure out what I'd figured out and probably the rest of my life to try to figure out how to distribute it and get people to Buy it and then get it to stick. And none of those are my area of expertise. So over the last five to 10 years, we've run across some of the best, some of the best of the best instructional designers who

came to us and kind of, you know, elegantly slapped us around and said, God, you've made it too complex, you need to make it much easier to lower the barrier of entry for people to actually get involved in that. That's why he wrote the Getting Things Done workbook. As it didn't really step down. The model just gave people 10 steps. And you know, we put, you know, QR codes in there. So people once you read the little thing, you can then see me talk about it for five minutes or three minutes, you know about that kind of make it a little hipper, and you know, more current about that, but that's, that would be an easy way. The easiest way to start, just do those 10 steps. And it's the same thing I would do if I sat down with anybody, let's do these 10 steps. First thing is get an in basket and get a big pile of paper and then let's empty your head. You know, that's not going to change, no matter who does it are, no matter where you start, you're gonna you need to start there. Really So, that would be my suggestion is just to get the book and you know it, I wrote the book in three parts trying to agonizing. As I started to write the book, I realized that my first draft just didn't work. Because there were three things I wanted to do. I wanted, first of all, I wanted to give people the model so they could see what it was pretty easily. And simply, I wanted to actually walk them through the implementation of the model if they actually wanted to do that. Because there's, you know, there's a lot of upkeep take this here, put this here. And then and then there was a, then there's also the And oh, by the way, there's some stuff that's going to happen that may surprise you, you know, when you actually implement some of these simple little things out there. And it turned out that I tried to write all that, like I did a seminar, which just didn't work, and so dark night of the soul, because this doesn't work. And so I actually tore up the first draft and took the next year to write a draft and wrote the book in three parts. First part gives you the model. The second part actually walks you through the implementation of a third part is that Oh, by the ways So, so if you, you know, if someone is interested in that, or if they have fallen off the wagon and want to get back on can't beat the book, probably a great way to do it, or just go look at, you know, just go to the GTD YouTube channel, oh, my God, I just I hadn't even looked on there. I think they're like, they're 40 things of me doing TEDx is and, and just talking about various aspects of this all you have to do you have to do to get around me and hear my voice and they'll start to turn you off. Just because for whatever reason, you know, beats me, but people get around me, they can't help it. They just they start to think about this kind of stuff in this kind of way. I guess because just this 74 years of experience kind of comes across.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 38:42

I always quip that you and Stephen Covey are the voices that I can listen to on an audiobook and just have it on loop. Dr. Covey just had one of those voices. I don't I don't know if you've ever heard Dr. Covey speak. But oh, yeah, but but his voice. This is one of those that not only calms, but has this clarity and raises and ends with it

that just always, always captivated me. And and since I was really young and speaking of that, you know, I wish that I had had GTD taught to me in an age appropriate way when I was in primary school. And you co wrote GTD for teams getting things done for teens, with Mike Williams, your former CEO, David Allen company, and Mark Wallace, that was published in 2018. And I'm curious, what are your thoughts about teaching GTD in primary, secondary and post secondary education settings?

Augusto Pinaud 39:30

Well, that's should be the future of the world. I mean, we've known for years, we really wanted to change the planet, let's get it to the kids as adults and trying to change adults behaviors like foof could look strange trying to change habits and all that, all that good stuff, which is tough stuff. But kids, they get it and you know, you can talk to Mark Wallace and Mark is still a primary school teacher, you know, and who's been teaching it to his kids for two or three years after he got thi, I can't hold this back for my kids. So I just wound up you know, he wound up figuring out kind of how To make it to your point age appropriate, you know, for the kids, but it's the same, you know, if you if you've read getting things done for teens, a lot of adults love that book because they say, Wow, it's got cartoons in there. And it's, you know, kind of makes it easier to see. And, and that's really cool. And it doesn't step the methodology down. It's the same thing. I mean, the CEO comes back from a board meeting, they still have to empty their briefcase with the business cards they collected and the receipts for the lunch that they need to do something with the notes for the meeting and what they have to decide about. And a nine year old boy still needs the MPs pack and find the note from the teacher that mom needs to sign. Same thing, right? It's just different content. But it's the same process and kids get it. They say, Oh, that's how you're supposed to do this. Okay. Yeah. So that's, that's kind of the hope of the world. We just never been able to find a really good business model, you know, to be able to get it into the school system. You know, apparently that's quite a morass. If you're trying to do that. But there are people working on that now, you know, to see where that could go. I know vital smarts, you know, our exclusive distributor now in the US and Canada is already got work going on for schools, because, you know, Stephen Covey's work in seven habits, you know, was quite successful in in terms of schools, but what happened was it got a lot of companies to fund it, you know, to be able to get it in there. So, yeah, all good stuff. That's, that's, I guess, sort of the future out there. If we could find a way to do that. I'm, I'm not a parent, not a teacher, I don't know how to approach that world. So I just have to wait and see if other, you know, somebody else's kind of shows up magically to help us do that.

But as a parent, as a parent, I can tell you that and I concur to something you said earlier today, you know, I have my my office has to desk where I'm talking right now and have a leather seat on the corner

and the kids know that if I'm sitting on the desk, they are not supposed to come and interrupt me unless it's important but if I'm sitting on the leather seat, They can come and talk and interrupt me. And all that. So they learn all those things much faster than the adults, the adults in the house. Don't have learned that component yet.

That's funny. Yeah, good. Good for you.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 42:15

So you had mentioned that you've been publishing the Two Minute Tips for turbulent times on YouTube and on the GTD podcast, which listeners can access from getting things done.com forward slash quadruple tttt. And you've mentioned on occasion that the greatest human fear is being out of control. And I'm curious what some advice you have for listeners to get mind like water, get into that ready state during this global health crisis.

Augusto Pinaud 42:41

So you guys is going to be the big deal. How about you capture everything that's got your attention now because of the change in the surprises you've had to go through? identify those new projects that you've now got identify the old projects you need to let go of or park to the you know, after pandemic list. You know, you In other words, you need to catch up, you need to pull up the rear guard, given the change situation. There's a maturity of getting things done and people's experience and the trajectory of experience with it. Over the years we've watched at a certain point, these kind of changes and surprises and major life transitions, throw you off your game, throw you off your GTD practice, say, Oh, I got too busy. We just sold our house on here, we just had a baby and, and I'm getting divorced and just found out I have a life threatening illness or whatever the hell those things are, that are usually those kind of times that test the mettle of your system. And then at a certain point, when those things happen, you get on GTD like you've never been on it before, so that you can get back in control and back in the driver's seat, even though you feel like you've been thrown off the surfboard. So it's like you know, we use the surfboard analogy. It's like having the surfboard allows you to surf on top of the waves in a minute. like water can sometimes feel like a pretty turbulent place. But as long as you got a good board, you're cool. But even if you got a good board, you're gonna fall off. But good surfers have an ankle tether, tied to the board. So they get back on real quick. And the more you trust, you have an ankle tether, the bigger waves you're willing to surf. So the more you trust, you know how to do GTD, it's kind of the strange Zen of it, I can let my life kind of get way out of control. And sometimes I do because I know I can get back fast. So you know, I get to get crazy and just go be spontaneous and just let stuff pile up and whatever, because I know how to zero that in basket out faster than most anybody else I know. And because I trust I know how to work the

system gives me a lot of freedom to not have to be in the system all the time. You know, so, you know, so back to that back to your point about how to how do you get to mind like water you get a mind like by the way you do it anytime. Get the stuff out of your head that's got your attention right now start to pay attention to that. Define new projects to find You know, the old projects that needs to be renegotiated and take a look around. And you know, one of my Two Minute Tips is do a worst case scenario. So that you can relieve that fear. You know, could you handle it if it gets as bad as you think it might possibly get. And that's not necessarily a fun exercise. But it's a very important exercise. Because if you don't do that, there's a part of you subliminally that keeps being afraid of it. So I think the way out is through if you sit and stare at it and look at it, and then it's about current reality, guys, it's like, let's, how do I find out what current reality is? And you can't be current reality? You know, and so what's real right now, how much bank How much money do you actually have in the bank? what's real? Oh, my God, everybody's leaving the company who's leaving? Well, Susan said that she thought she might want to change jobs. And people just tend to exaggerate like crazy and generalize like crazy and then freak themselves out like crazy because it'll allows them to be in complaining victim mode, as opposed to Okay, what the heck am I gonna do about this right now I want to be different. What's, what's my desired outcome? And what's the next step I need to take to move the needle on it? I'm not saying this is easy, guys, you know, especially in situations like this, wow, what just happened? Okay, what do I want to have true? While I want to feel comfortable, I want to get onto cruise control with my family now that we're all home for God knows how long you know. Great. That's a project. What's your next step? I need to order a desk. It's an interesting statistic about how many small desks are being sold around the world, though. Think IKEA is probably in great shape.

Yeah, here in the States, there is no money. There's no second monitors. Amazon can deliver you one

David Allen 46:50

Yeah, well. So that's, that's my answer is like, okay, what's current reality. And to that effect, I think you've made you've heard me in a other podcasts or whatever talking about it, people ask me favorite books. I've just read a book last year fabulous book by Oliver Berkman called The Antidote. It's happiness for people who can't stay in positive thinking. And it's really a great book if you haven't read it yet. It is totally fun. He's a great writer. He's a GTDer too, by the way. So, Oliver Berkman, The Antidote. He talks a lot about the stoics that I didn't I hadn't done my own history about what the stoics were really like. Everybody thinks they were sort of hard nosed and ascetics or whatever they were really about current reality stuff. Right? Don't just go non on new new. Don't Don't ignore all the negative stuff. No, there's negative stuff. Hey, have at it. Just be aware of it. You don't want to be hung up in it, but you don't want to

ignore it. So and that's a lot of I think people resist the Getting Things Done process because they're gonna have to deal with current reality. What exactly have you committed to what's got your attention? Come on. Let's get the Just get it all out of your head.

Augusto Pinaud 48:04
So, so there is my

Raymond Sidney-Smith 48:06
Yeah, it's, it's remarkable how, you know, the Buddha and the stoics. And, you know, have really come to the same understanding of of present mindedness and mindfulness. Generally, I think it's something to think about. Yeah. So this is going to be my last trip down memory lane with you before we move on, which is that you've noted that you've had 35 jobs before the age of 35. And if my research is correct, you've been building GTD since about 1981 1882, as you said, so that's about 39 years more than 39 years now. What advice do you have for those who may be starting their careers today, now that you've been doing and, and teaching GTD for longer than all the cumulative other 35 jobs before that,

Augusto Pinaud 48:49
you know, I don't know I you know, I? There's it's a good question. And I would say just my general advice to anybody is it never hurts to do an ideal scene. You know, how would you like to be assuming you could have wild success in this world five years from now? What would you be doing? And not necessarily what would you be doing what you'd be experiencing? Because many times, you know, people think they want to be a great writer or an actor, or they want to have they want to, you know, do a startup software company make a gazillion dollars? And a real good question that I learned back in my personal growth years, you know, in insight seminars and all those kind of experiential seminars was, what experience Are you really looking for? Well, I want to read Porsche, What experience do you think a red Porsche is going to give you? Oh, well, I'll be styling, they'll be attractive and I'll have a sense of freedom and fun and whatever. Then they get the red Porsche and Are they worried about anybody hitting it and they just get so uptight they can't afford the gas or the insurance. Like Well, what happened? Well, they they got more invested in the materiality of it than the experience of it. So I would suggest that people, it's fine. Give yourself the permission to have the fantasy about what You might want to do if things were wildly successful, but then back up a little bit and say, What experience do you think that would give you? Because you might find that the experience you think that we'll give you is much more accessible to you right now than you think. Right? I want a sense of fun and freedom. But what could you do right now that could give you a sense of fun and freedom. And let me go run with my dog. Yay. You know, so sometimes it's the inner experience or the experience, the experience that you're really looking for, you know, we call that inside seminars, we call that symbols versus experience.

I want the symbol but what what I really want is the experience I think that symbol is going to give me so that's probably a core piece of advice I would have for anybody. And don't, don't go ahead and embarrass yourself with the biggest fantasy that you could come up with. There was a good friend of mine. You know, my spiritual coach years ago said why don't people lose in their own fantasies who else is looking? So go ahead, fantasize like a wave And then, you know, then come back to current reality. But not only fantasize, but then imagine the experience that would give you then ask yourself, what could you be doing in the short term that would move you toward having more of those kinds of experiences right now. And I had somebody coached me with that years ago. And that's kind of how I moved into the consulting work 39 years ago. But saying, okay, here's what I really wanted was people's the ability to have people's attention so I can share with them things that I considered valuable. They said, well, gee, David, what could you do in the short term that would allow you to get more people's attention? And I don't know what my answer was then. But that got me on the path of Okay, let me start doing the kinds of things that would give me the kind of things that would be more fulfilling to me. And there's also there's nothing more there's nothing better in terms of success in life than being authentic. So being authentic with yourself, you know, acknowledging whatever the current reality is Are that you're dealing with how you feel. There was another one of my Two Minute Tips was, it's a good idea to acknowledge how you're feeling, especially in these days, there's a lot of fear and panic and worry going on. You don't want to dwell on that. But you also don't want to ignore that you have those feelings, that's a reality. So again, it's no the way out is through there. So just dealing with whatever that you're dealing with there. But being authentic, being authentic with yourself and authentic with the people around you. You know, it's, it's, it's hard to beat in terms of, you know, what, that's the value that's going to present to you and then the quality of life that that's going to increase, if you're not being there already.

A person who had loved context and have loved context as a first time I read that on the book, you know, I, I see how people, you know, really, in a way never many people never understood it, you know, they it's been interesting to see people struggling during this pandemic. You know, with logical to the current reality, but also see how inside of some of these GTD groups or people who practice to GTD, how their context are disappearing was this pandemic, you know, they change from 10 context to at home, okay, maybe at home on that computer and how they're struggling with that, but now that the world is going to start slowly open, I'm sure we are going to see the struggle on the other way as some of those contexts turn irrelevant. Okay. And what advice do you have for those people who the world was turned around by the pandemic context disappear, even GTDers and now that they're coming, they're going to discover that their context don't are not permanent and, and you shared that I remember many, many years ago, you had a

program called getting things done fast that I think my CD is pain still by itself on the books, so much I listen to that, but You talk down on your experience with your cell phone and your sailboat. And, well, that was a relevant context until the sailboat was gone. But I think you have that clarity, you have always had that clarity that others may not have. So all these to say, what advice you have regarding that permanence or impermanence of this context for our listeners?

Well, that's a lot of the reason to do weekly reviews is so that you keep systems are dynamic. They need to keep changing as you keep changing. Your filing system should be changing regularly, because some of that stuff is going to be old and out of date and some of the stuff you're going to need a new context to be able to see certain things and I think staying aware of, you know, of that, you know, over the years, I've, at times felt that this is you know, this this, this list is feeling old and out of date. What do I need to do? So, you know, one example of that was, you know, maybe three or four years ago, I used to have the stuff that I was going to write On my @Computer list, because I can do it on a plane or whatever, and it might be a forward or somebody book, it might be, I don't know, some article that I, you know, my staff wanted me to produce or something like that. And then I found myself resisting my @Computer list because those things require creative thinking. So I split that off, and I created a @Creative_Writing list. They're all at computer, but I do that in a very different context. And I need a very different context. And what it did was, it took all the pressure off my @Computer list, those were just businesslike things, you know, things I needed to get done. So it made my list that lists more, much more attractive. And I was willing to engage with my Creative_Writing list in a context where that would be the appropriate thing to do. So, you know, that hasn't happened often. But that was a good example of where I needed to, you know, kind of, you know, I teach this stuff slap myself around, come on, David, you know, you need to upgrade your system, so that you stop resisting, you know, looking at the content. And so, I think That's some of the sophistication of GTD. And GTD is like an art or any kind of a craft. How good can you get at cooking spaghetti? How good can you get a chess? How good can you get at fencing? How good can you get at relationships? How good those things are infinite in terms of how much sophistication, there's no, there's no limit to the sophistication of GTD. None. You'll keep getting better at it. And you will need to keep changing what your system is because as soon as your system is static, you know, I fall off my own wagon regularly because as soon as I create something new, I've got to give up something i've you know, I'm already up to here, but he's up to here. So if you create something new, something's gotta give, something's got to undo or something's got to redo in order to be able to then get back on cruise control again. So the whole criteria my criteria for prioritizing my criterion for my own system design and upgrading is all about what do I need to do to get this off my mind. Right? What do

I need to do to get this off my mind. Come on, all of us have a weird electronics drawer. Right? And I can see mine right now. It's, it's at my hand right now. So, if I pulled it out and showed it to you go, Oh my God, what a mess. Well, you know, throw stuff in there that's the place for that to go and that's, that's the place for that to go at a certain point, you know, every six to 12 months I go, you know, I need to go get some baggies and my labeler and you know, and really label what that charger is, you know the thing crapped out but the charger was still good, I thought it might still need it or I don't know what the hell this thing is, you know? So I'm going to put a question mark on the label on the on this thing. So in case I find something that Oh, that's where that thing is. Oh my god. So, you know, it's, that's an ongoing process. And right now especially, that's another one of my tips and tips for turbulent times. One of the things is to upgrade your systems guys, now's the time to do that. Now's the time to clean up your computer. Now's the time to get that new program you told yourself you wanted to do. I just got GarageBand back on my computer again and got a good coach to help me do that. Because there's other things that I want to do. So I'm just kind of upgraded that. So there's a lot of opportunity to keep kind of tweaking this and you need to, that's where the customizing comes in. And that's where you'll make the system much more personal, you know, is how is it doing that? And I understand because now so many of the kids just do so many things on their phone, the app phone kind of loses its con loses its meaning anymore, kind of there's a lot of stuff people can pretty much do anywhere if they're carrying all those, you know, distributed digital devices around with them. So yeah, and I don't have the answer to that. So what would you need to do to do that? You just want to make sure that it's off your mind and you're not, you know, go. Don't zone out because you're looking at 400 things you can't do in some context. But hey, If you want to clean out, just put everything back on one next action list and then only redistribute them as you feel like they've seems appropriate to do.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 59:09

Now, since the beginning of my GTD practice, right after I read the book, I implemented it in an Excel workbook. And I had had all of my, you know, system in that and then I moved it over to probably shortly thereafter to remember the milk. And to this day, I still manage all of my tasks, all of my next actions are actually on one list. And then all of the contexts are smart lists that filter the list down to what I need to see when I need to see it. So it gives me that ability to have one master next actions list and then only see what I need. And that gives me that dynamic process to be able to say, Okay, this list is no longer good. And I don't know I don't need this context any longer. And I've always read that in your materials that this was moldable and changeable, but I know there are a lot of literalists out there who got stuck with @work, @office, @home,

Augusto Pinaud 1:00:00

well, maybe maybe it would help. Sometimes it helps for people to give you a little bit of the backstory of the history of context. See, when we were first doing the versions of these seminars, it kind of led up to GTD later on, we called it managing accelerated productivity or whatever. And I was doing today's seminar. And we were using, actually, at the time, we were using the time design system, we actually included a paper based system that came out of Denmark because it was much better than any other tool. This was pre Palm Pilot. For gave up systems, I gave up systems once the Palm Pilot came out, because I couldn't, with all honesty, say this was the best system anymore. But until then, I could with all honesty, and so we actually included the time design book in the planner, elegant, elegant graphics, wonderful, sophisticated, cool thing. And we included that actually had people start to use that in the seminar, but at the time, and we actually designed it so that you could actually have a page turned over so you can have a list of all your next actions next to your calendar. And so when you change your calendar page, you didn't have to rewrite anything, you just flip the other page, that previous page over again. So you kept a running list of next actions right next against your calendar, which was radical, you know, from 1981-82. Whenever that was back there, and so, but then there was this weird thing that came along called the mobile phone. I don't know if you guys remember those things weighed about three pounds. Right? And but it was a mobile phone. Oh my god. And so what happened was suddenly there were things you could do out and about, because you had a phone with you. And so I didn't want to have to keep finding the phone calls on my action list. So what I did was okay, let me create a second page in here just called calls. Right. So I created a contact called calls as opposed to all the other next actions that I had. Wow, how cool is that? right because they were tired. Because you're out and about, that's pretty much all I could do was calls. And then I had a guy a seminar turned out to be a good friend of mine, who, who was semi retired, he had a sailboat up in in Maine, lived in Boston. And he said, David, that gives me an idea. There's a lot of things I want to do when I'm at my sailboat. Not about my sailboat, because many times he had to buy stuff at the boating store in Boston for the sailboat, but he says, they're things I want to do when only own the same book. So he created an app sailboat page for his thing. It's like, wow, how cool was that. And he's found that stupendous, really helped him a lot, you know, kind of uncorked a lot of energy for him. And then some point, the Palm Pilot came out where you could create lots of lists very easily and move things from one list to the other much more easily than you could in paper based system. And that's when the whole idea of, well that kind of makes sense to start to organize things because it's easy to do. I can't These are things at the office, these things to do at home, these are errands to run, etc. That's where all this came from. So there was there was no grand epiphany, you know, like, Oh my god, you need to organize everything by context. And it just turned out to be quite practical, you know to do that made a lot more sense to be able to manage the list a lot more

easily. So you know, you nobody should get hung up about anything other than what's the what's the easiest way to manage your list raise sounds like you've come up with your way to do that. So

Raymond Sidney-Smith 1:03:23

I'm very happy with it. Dude, I have to admit this, you and I are actually hosting a conference in June, called Remote Work Productivity Conference. It's a live remote conference, a virtual conference. And in to start the conference, we're actually going to have our first session be a panel discussion of remote work productivity experts. They're going to come together to talk about the future of remote work productivity, how people stay productive in a remote or work from home environment, as you noted, you know, there's, there's so much happening because of this global health crisis. And I'm curious about your views on what comes after these trends. turbulent times, for most knowledge workers who don't necessarily have to go back to the office unless they're made to, what do you think is going to change in terms of people's, I don't know, work modalities, their perspective on managing their work, and engaging with work when they now have quite a bit of freedom to work from anywhere?

Augusto Pinaud 1:04:20

Well, it'll be the opportunity and the challenge to manage yourself. You know, because what you're doing is you're just taking away another structure. You know, come on, when you were a baby, everything was structured for you, you know, food, your clothes, everything else at a certain point, you got to an age where you could put on your own clothes. certain point you got to a point where you could actually feed yourself. Right, a certain point, you know, you got to so I could go through the path of how you've matured in your life, where you no longer had an external structure. You had to build your own structure to make that happen. You know, in the US Anyway, when kids leave High School, they lose mom as their trusted system. Right? One of the reasons we wrote getting things done for teens, because a lot of kids never learned how to do that, because they could trust that both school and Mom, you know, held the structure sufficiently for them terms of what they needed to do. So this is just another level of that, hey, now you do not have an office to go to where you see everybody doing the same kind of thing, then so you better do the same kind of thing. So you look good. Right now you don't have that structure anymore. So you need to I think the guy who wrote the 37 signals, you know, they tried that because they wrote a they wrote a whole book about hiring virtual workers, because they were one of the first companies to have nothing but virtual workforce. And, you know, they made some several good points in there, you need to hire for that. You need to have somebody who's comfortable already and being able to be, you know, to work from their, their own environment. And I read, I'll make I get the numbers wrong, but I read Some while ago that by I'll make it up by 2050 50% of the US workforce is going to be self employed. So that's why I said earlier that the the pandemic has

just, you know, added exponential speed to the virtuality and self management needs out there in the world. And so that's, that's just going to keep going. So, you know, the advice is, Hey, folks, GTD can manage yourself. You know, again, I haven't worked in an office since 1981. So I kind of scratch my head cold. Yeah. So what's the big deal? You know, you need to build your own work environment in your own work station. And, and like you like Augusto, like you were saying, I need to build it, I need to create my own parameters. And for people who, you know, it's newly that they're now in having to deal with both kids and life partners and other things like that in their environment. That's, you know, I another two minute tip, communicate, renegotiate, get clear. Hey, guys. You know can help me out I need when I sit here I've got to get these kind of things done Can you help me out here and so just having good communication with anybody who's involved in the work that you're doing and the lifestyle you're in another critical factor so those are those are very very very critical things to do.

Yeah I have finally was a pandemic make people understand the power of inbox on the entrance of my office you know, my my understanding from listening you for for many years and you talking about your technology or on the on your on your right if you love shiny objects I remember one Instance, you talking or discussing was on a recording with Eric Mac about shiny objects and he said something that is something that I took for lives and say one of one of the things that are incredible for him at the time was that you could pick let's play with this toy, but immediately decide, yeah, this is something that will work is not going to work we need our need and drop it regardless of the investment, the cost and all that and that's a tip that I have get for me that honestly I'm grateful because they have saved me so many hours not only in the gaining from the new tool, the whole thing done wasting time making sure that that tool is going to work. But as a person who loves tools and gadgets and spinning things and gear toys, you know, what you have recently get that is cool that you know that you are enjoying that people may or may not know that you enjoy

David Allen 1:08:38

nothing much new I mean I my by to use ratio, what used to be 10 to one now, it's pretty much one to one, you know, I pretty much don't get anything unless I really really know I need it and I've seen it, you know somebody who's got it and know what it does. And so I'm a lot more discreet these days, you know in terms of that stuff, so it's good question. I don't think I've got much Anything new? Well, my new MacBook 16 inch is great, you know, I got rid of my big screen because I was running into problems with my second screen, you know, hooking up my laptop to it every once in a while stuff would would kind of screw up. So I said, you know, I'm just gonna move back to just a single laptop with a nice, nice screen that I've got, so that I can move it around without having to change an unplugged gazillion things, and sort of work anywhere. So that's probably that's the newest thing that I've done. Is, is the MacBook Pro 16 inch, great screen.

Fabulous. And it's eight terabytes, you know, so I can load GarageBand and lots of other things out here, if I want to do that.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 1:09:48

So, as we as we close out the time with you, and we appreciate you being with us, I want to talk a little bit about the future. And so, first up, what's next for David Allen. That is if you think about your home Horizon three horizon four I know you've mentioned on on many interviews that you don't think that far in the future all that often but you must know what's going to happen for you. You're you as you said, you're going to be 75 in December of this year. And and you are now in this next phase of David Allen company and GTD focus. What What do you personally plan to do more you Ikagai, more other things in your life?

Augusto Pinaud 1:10:25

Well, I've started painting acrylic paintings, those are mine you see on the wall and I picked up a flute again, I haven't played the flute in 30 years I taught myself to play years ago and had a great flute and it got stolen and I didn't have the money to really replace it with the same quality so I got into other things and whatever kind of let it drop. So those are two things kind of staring at me as I look over my computer here. I see both my flute and my easel and so forth and kind of a blank canvas kind of intimidating me about what's what's next. Learning Dutch is my Alzheimer prevention Right. So and So Catherine, I would, you know, plan to immigrate as soon as we can as soon as we can get the language down, because we love the country. We love the Netherlands we love Amsterdam love living here. So those are big projects in and of itself are that's a big enough project, believe me? No, just that one. And a lot of my work has been and will continue to be to support our licensees, you know, around the world who we've now certified to do coaching and GTD trainings, and a lot of support for that and community of practice. You know, we just had a great session yesterday with about 30 coaches, you know, sort of that we've certified all over the world, you know, from South Africa, from Canada, from Brazil, from Germany, from Australia, whatever. So we have a whole world network now of really, really cool people that have been trained and certified, which is not an easy thing to do. This is not like a mail order certification for GTD Believe me And so supporting all of that, that's a lot of what I've done over the last two or three years and Amsterdam, certainly more the center of the world and Santa Barbara was in terms of being able to get around and help folks and show up and do press and so forth. And kind of guys, I'm still doing two or three podcasts a week, you know, for the last 20 years into I keep thinking at some point, everybody who's going to get GTD will have got it, and then I'll have to go back to being a waiter again. You know, would you be okay, I love being a waiter as my, my second favorite profession. So. So that's kind of the future. And again, we have a big mission, it's called to create a world where there are no problems only projects. And so just being available to

who's asking, you know, and that's a lot of what you know, I've structured my life to do was to be able to sort of follow my nose and follow my spontaneous intuitive hunches and sort of pay attention to what the world seems to want. So and, you know, we've just, thank goodness, we've spent the last two years building a virtual version of GTD online and now that's coming online fast. So being able to build and support the virtual world of communicating, the getting things done stuff is also kind of a new frontier and one where I'm very much involved in and sort of doing ad hoc stuff, like my Two Minute Tips for turbulent times. And stuff like that, and being able to do that easily and, and, you know, now I just punch a button or two, and, you know, as you guys know, it's, it's done, you know, and it's now out there, and we've got a good social media guy who's, you know, getting it all in the right places at the right time. So that it's more of a service than anything else is to let people get some of these tips. In case they're helping at all with what with what's going on. And, you know, just assuming and hoping, you know, kind of did a worst case scenario myself, we can still survive, because most of our income is coming from all of these partners and you know, all their stuff just got cancelled all their live stuff. So, just seeing how soon that's going to turn around and change and things will turn around, there will be a post pandemic world. But I'm not quite sure. I know my two doctors that I've talked to in the last week, I've asked them about house telemedicine, and they were both surprised by how easy it was. And they didn't think they would be able to sort of navigate that world where they can do it, you know, virtually, and see your patients and clients. But I think a lots gonna happen. And there's a lot that's going to happen in the world because a lot of the world has been talking to each other that would never talk to each other before the scientists, the environmental people, lots of other people out there. So there's been a you know, there's a lot of those connections have been made and they're not going to disappear. So we're going to be in a more global world. We're going to be in a more sensitive world, I think about a lot of things. And certainly to your point there gonna be a lot more people working from home and, you know, it's kind of net needing to and navigate their life independently. So my so my future is just to be as available as I can. For all of that and sort of maintain as best we can a business model so I can keep doing it.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 1:15:12

So people will be able to go to getting things done calm and take a self paced virtual course at some point in the future is what I just heard you say?

Augusto Pinaud 1:15:19

They probably will it right now. It's live virtual. So right now there's a live Virtual Training and vital smarts is actually offering a live, you know, virtual training in the US and Canada. And we now have that available globally for all of our global partners. And I don't know if you know, but Stephen Covey's son David Covey is our

partner who's helped us build our sort of global network out there so nice. It's a nice world. It's it's a great world. A lot of people are in communication with each other and within ways and probably more sensitively than they would have normally done before simply because of what's gone on. So there is a silver lining.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 1:15:58

Totally and I very much Echo your sentiments in terms of what the future holds. So I thought we would end the interview with the toughest question I could possibly ask you which is that you lived in Ojai California so I'm guessing you know Santa Barbara and wine country for many years where you ran the David Allen Company. So the only question I could ask you is what's your favorite wine?

David Allen 1:16:21

really really really good wine

Raymond Sidney-Smith 1:16:24

well, dodged

David Allen 1:16:25

and I love I love I know I love all types. Oh, come on. I mean, Château d'Yquem with a give me a Sauternes. Cristal if I had that drink champagne, though Dom Pérignon it's not bad. I love the dry and crisp stuff. If I had the money and you know and you know if I win at the tables of Las Vegas, I would usually order you know, Château Lafite or something, you know, a fabulous red Bordeaux and I love the burgundy whites. You know, please the All that good stuff and I love the the Bordeaux reds. I love Italian. Almost all of them. So, there's a big there's a big list.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 1:17:15

Well, I just wanted to say on behalf of both Augusto and myself, thank you are

David Allen 1:17:20

you gonna you're send me some of those

Raymond Sidney-Smith 1:17:23

we will we will find a crate we will find a crate. Well, I just wanted to say that, you know, 20 odd years ago I picked up getting things done. Like I set off a book and Barnes and Noble off the shelf and Barnes and Noble and it fundamentally really changed my life. It created a community I would not have met some of the most wonderful people I have in the world and people who I consider dear friends to this day Augusto included and many other folks Michelle Gunn, who runs the GTD virtual study group podcast and so many other people around the world. And so I just wanted to thank you for putting this out into the world putting this out into kind of open sourcing it as you called it and making available To us, so that we can all live more

productive, you know, vibrant lives. And so Thank you, David, thank you for being with us. Thank you for being with us on the planet. And thank you for being here on the show.

David Allen 1:18:11

Thanks for the invitation. This was fun, guys. Yay.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 1:18:14

That was David Allen, author of getting things done the art of stress free productivity. While we are at the end of our discussion, the conversation doesn't stop here. If you have a question or comment about what we've discussed during this cast with David, please visit our episode page on productivity cast dotnet there on the podcast website at the bottom of the page, you can feel free to leave a comment or a question. We read and respond to every comment questions, so just feel free to shoot us a message down there. If this is your first time with us, please consider adding us to your favorite podcast app. If you click on the subscribe tab. on productivity cast dotnet you'll see the instructions to follow us and get episodes downloaded for free every time a new one comes out. If you have a topic about personal productivity you'd like us to discuss on a future cast, please visit productivity gains dotnet forward slash contact, you can leave a voice recorded message or type a message like type text message. And maybe we'll feature you on a future episode and that topic, thanks to a goose to pan out, and of course, Francis Wade and our galax who aren't with us in this episode, but join us every week here on ProductivityCast. You can learn more about them and their work by visiting productivitycast.net Also, I'm Ray Sidney-Smith. And on behalf of the ProductivityCast team here, here's to your productive life. Take care everybody.

Voiceover Artist

And that's it for this ProductivityCast, the weekly show about all things productivity, with your hosts, Ray Sidney-Smith and Augusto Pinaud with Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks.