123-productivity-labs-methods-edition-bullet-journal-product...

📅 Sun, 2/13 4:44PM 🕐 48:55

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

bullet journal, tasks, system, notes, index, evernote, digital, tool, notebook, page, bullet journaling, book, methodology, implement, productivity, part, benefit, journal, writing, day

SPEAKERS

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

---

V **Voiceover Artist** 00:00

Are you ready to manage your work and personal world better to live a fulfilling productive life, then you've come to the right place. ProductivityCast the weekly show about all things productivity, here are your hosts, Ray Sidney-Smith and a Gousto pinout with Francis Wade and art Gelwicks.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 00:17

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

A **Augusto Pinaud** 00:23

I'm Augusto I'm

👤 00:23

Francis Wade. And

A **Art Gelwicks** 00:25

I'm Art Gelwicks. Welcome,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 00:27

gentlemen, and welcome to our listeners to this episode of ProductivityCast. Today, what we're doing is we are introducing a new I guess, we can call it a series in which we are going to be talking about different experiments, that is just discussing how we have each experimented with various methods and tools. Today is one of those methods discussions. And we're going to be talking about the bullet journal, we've of course, talked about the bullet journal in the past both what it is in Episode 35. And then again, we talked about really how you can tailor the bullet journal to your own needs. And episode 73. I'll put links to those in the show notes for us. dogfooding. A methodology when you're very used to another is very interesting. And I thought, well, we could do this more often, we could actually try these things out. And since art had had experience with the bullet journal already, I thought, well, let's put this together. And so good stone, I really started ideating. Well, let's do this with other methods over the course of time. And so that's really where productivity Labs was born from. And so let's get into it. Let's talk about the bullet journal in its most basic sense, because like I said, you can jump back to Episode 35, and go deep in to what the bullet journal method is. But let's do a an overview of the system itself. Then we'll talk about our own setup experiences, and then our own experiences actually using the bullet journal. So let's start with what is the bullet journal. And since we're going to consider you the resident expert, what is the bullet journal Just in brief for listeners, the bullet

A   Art Gelwicks 01:56

journal itself, and I'm not going to do writer Carol justice with this, but I'm going to sum it up as best I can. It's a method of tracking activities and tracking notes on a running in daily basis. That is not tool specific. It is platform agnostic. So you can do bullet journaling. In a paper journal, you can do it on a digital pad, you can do it in most productivity applications. The design of it is supposed to be simplified, very simplified and very adaptable uses literally just that bullets and variations on bullets to help you keep track of the different things that you need to do. And we are making notations. There's a lot of detail that you can dig into it. But if you think about taking notes on a legal pad, and then adding some icons to it to make sure you can tell one from another, you're probably about a quarter of the way to a bullet journal at that

A   Augusto Pinaud 02:51

point. For me, it's inevitable when I think on the bullet journal, and even with this exercise of the bullet journal, to think about Patrick Brown dodge Plus system and and we will put a link on on the notes because that's the first time I heard about the idea of not using something digital or not the first time but the first time I saw an implementation that seems robust enough, it really fits really well. Basically, the idea is that you use a dash and you can modify it, you know, they sit in the action is done, or you're waiting for delegates that data point or move. What I like about what I did was a bullet journal is that it's really I can see for certain people how this can be really useful. How can having everything in there, what kills me was a double entry that reentry they're recreating that part, I did not see a benefit on the cost benefit part of that in doing all that reentry. So even that my test was digital, and even that might test supposed to work really well. On the way I did it. I saw benefits. And I see a person who love paper on which brain works in a paper like base way can see a lot of benefits out of this. My concern was if doing this, you will skip the step of processing those notes. Because that's what I found online.

You know that now that I can index me to process notes, that was a danger. Because there were things into that system that never made it out of that just because I knew where to find it on the index of that

A **Art Gelwicks** 04:35

you're bringing up probably one of the biggest weaknesses I consider in the system. It is not automation friendly. It is not designed or having any intention to leverage streamlining functionality that allows you to integrate if you're going to do this in a digital environment with other systems, tying it to task lists and things like that, and you have to go back to its original core Is that it, it is simplified enough that it can be applied everywhere. But because it is simplified enough, there's a lot of functionality that we would expect within productivity tools. That just doesn't exist because it's, it has to be able to be implemented anywhere. I mean, you could implement the bullet journal in Microsoft Word, you could implement it in Excel, you could implement it hack in a PowerPoint slide, if you wanted to. The concept carries over regardless of the platform. But just like you're saying, A Gousto. That means that labor part of it is on you. It's not on the tool that you're utilizing to manage that. I see that a lot. And I'll talk about the platform I've worked with it in. But there's a couple of different ways that it's commonly implemented on, on my platform. And they all struggle from that same problem is that lack of integrity when it comes to automation and streamlining functionality, and you have to resign yourself to the fact that you're going to be the one that cranks the widgets on this, you're going to be turning that handle, not some other system, or not some other tool rather

A **Augusto Pinaud** 06:12

well, and that brought my second shortcoming is how much this is really is a scalable, you know, I pick it for a particular project, not for my whole system. But even in this particular project. And it had been worked great the project start on March 1, it was a great way to do the test to collect the information to have all in one place. Even as the project is progressing, and the complexity and the pieces on the project has been adding, there has been more times that I'm that I've been feeling that it's slowing down the process instead of allowing me and it may be a part of automation, it may be a part of, I don't know exactly. But it felt multiple times that it was clear to me in week three, that this tool will not even be sufficient or sufficient for this project. Even that is not really complex one, it has a lot of input and reports. But it wasn't a complex one, and it was choking by week three.

A **Art Gelwicks** 07:15

Yeah, it's not a high velocity system, it's not, don't kid yourself, if you think you're going to do high velocity work through this kind of a system. Because it's not designed for that I wouldn't try and run a corporate project using a bullet journal. I however, would probably maintain all of my own notes about that project using a bullet journal structure, and emulate a lot of that functionality, because I have found that it is scalable at the individual level, it can go up and you can handle personal and professional within the same system and build it up. The one thing I have discovered, though, is you really you have to commit yourself to just using the system, you have to commit yourself to using your bullet journal and making it your trusted and your trusted tool. If you're trying to integrate it in with other things like a task manager or

project manager or for something else. That's just going to increase your workload. And there are aspects of the bullet journal process such as the table of contents and the indexing and that lend themselves to to digital platforms, but still doesn't replace the work that you need to do to maintain that thinking system. I don't want to sound like I'm criticizing it, though, because it's no more complicated. It's actually far less complicated than systems like zettelkasten. And that sort, where you'll spend an exorbitant amount of time thinking the system. Rather than just thinking the content going into it bullet journaling, you really don't have that effort, you can go through and run a bullet journal with very little thought. But you're right, you start to run in those challenges are cross reference of historical archiving, identification of content over a period of time or related content, those are all challenges based on this. But again, it's not really built for that it's built for an individual to maintain what they have going on, rather than trying to run something significantly larger

F Francis Wade 09:14

guys would probably know that another bullet journal user, and I haven't tried it. And at the same time, I'm looking to see what benefits there are, that would translate into the digital world because for my understanding is that I could never make me the devil's advocate today that the system is a solution for people who use PayPal so its structure is designed system one who really wants to use paper and then that in that world, I don't use paper. I call after losing losing some important journal unimportant journal once I swore never to go back to using paper for that reason So I'm looking for what benefits there are what features I can replicate over the world. So that's that's kind of where I'm coming from listening to see what I can use.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 10:09

That's a great segue to our next portion of the show, which is talking about really setting up the bullet journal in the ways in which we all have to date. And so I'll just go very, very briefly and say that, for my purposes, I actually set it up in Evernote. And what I wanted to do was utilize the bullet journal in a complete digital environment, using as close to only Evernote as possible. So I decided, well, Evernote has sketch notes, formerly known as ink notes and other areas of the tool. It also has the application penultimate. And so I just decided to implement it completely inside of Evernote. And so doing that I utilized just pages of sketch notes inserted into various notes within the Evernote notes that are inside of a notebook. And, you know, Volume One contains everything. And in essence, being able to pin the various logs so that you're capable of accessing those logs very quickly. And instead of page numbering, we're in essence, just copying internal note links in the various notes to jump to various pages. So that solved for the page numbering concern that one would have in a digital environment, I also did still number all of my pages, just to keep the index appropriately kind of organized to keep true to kind of writer Carol's perspective there. And so you both had the indexed, which allowed you to be able to say, if you had a very long note, you would be able to still scroll through the note and quickly find something because of the index. But the reality was, is that if you have any note, your note would have internal note links from the index to the note in questions. So you can jump to any of those pieces without really much difficulty, which is a concern that you would have in a paper based system. And that's it. But that was the that was the complicated setup. Obviously, I showed it, I showed it in the master class, I can't show it here for folks who are listening. But that was the end all be all, which was I wanted to be able to show that Evernote could manifest a bullet journal system in it using handwriting technology. And quite

honestly, it worked out pretty well. I mean, again, bullet journals, not the system for me. But I can see help someone who utilizes a digital environment and wants to keep everything digital notwithstanding, but likes handwriting like I do, I enjoy taking notes by hand, I really do. It's just not as efficient all the time in every environment. So I take handwritten notes using usually the rocket book notebook. But now I can see myself doing a little bit more of that using Evernote notes. And using the sketch note functionality, far more often than I would otherwise, now that I've done this experiment, so I'm glad that I did it. Although I won't be I won't be sticking with a bullet journal for my system.

A Augusto Pinaud 13:19

So I did mine on good notes. And there were two things and one of them I will discuss later more in detail. But the first thing I said I noticed is I begin not processing the notes because I could index easily and good notes allows you to hyperlink. So even if you move the page, the index will get fixed, it will build the index for you automatically. So if you like that idea of the digital bullet journal to really between in the iPad with good notes, it's really an ideal situation because you can index the index will be built automatically for you. If you decide to move things around the index will automatically update and you can add different kinds of pages, notes, PDF, and everything you can think in between that made for a person who enjoyed that really, really incredible useful. What I learned is I don't like notes that much but I love Doodle in meetings. What I noticed is there was a significant amount of doodling part is my own conviction that my handwritten it's awful and it's completely useless after a bit. So I do better typing and this is what I want to discuss later on in the third segment is what I noticed was that is that in conjunction to something that we discuss on Anything But Idle about how the studies are showing that handwritten or the typing makes no difference is it made me to reflect about the storage part. Will the bullet journal will be a tool that I use to manage my day to day? No, it moves too slow as art, you know, point out, okay, it's I need to move much faster than that, or at least I feel that I need to move much faster than that. That said, it allow me to think or rethink on might reach dribble for contents, okay, I have trust the search function instead of the index function. And what I learned doing during this project on the bullet journal is, the index allows me to see much faster than going to the 20 pages or the 20 notes, okay? Notes for the iPad, or the iOS have improved significantly, where I can have now unwritten and attachments and stuff. So it really put me into which one is the device or platform that I want, I want to have them on good notes in everywhere, or I want to have them on, on the notes and the indexing part really make a difference. Because I don't need necessarily to search, I can go and look quickly on that index. And we'll have all the information for me. And I just click and it will take me that regardless if I am on the iPhone or the iPad. So that was really an important thing. Again, my biggest concern is use it for unprocessed notes, that will not work for me. But if I can process the notes, and now I'm really doing it as a file cabinet, I think it could be something that may come to my system in some way or form.

A Art Gelwicks 16:42

For me, I used one note, and I would say that of all the tools, and I've used it, I've done bullet journaling on a couple of other tools, I would say that OneNote is probably the best tool for bullet journaling, if you're trying it if even try it from a digital standpoint, because it really lends itself to either a text base or a digital ink based or integrating the two together. I use it all the time. It has the ability to do custom tagging, which is a visual tag MEK mechanisms allows you

to include icons with your tags, which lends itself again to the bullet journal approach. And the color coding plus, it allows you to go back and do things that you can't do with bullet journaling, such as look for everything that is a particular type of tag. So if you've identified something as maybe a chore on your bullet journal listing, you can pull back a listing of all the chores over across multiple pages. The reason why I say OneNote so good for this, though, is there's a huge OneNote community out there that uses it for bullet journaling specifically and what they do. It's, it's interesting, because it's, I don't want to say it's a niche because it's so large. They are iPad digital ink users. And what they do is they use templated bullet journal structures to capture daily content, write it through using digital ink, and then create their own indexes. So they're creating basically a paper journal in the digital space, taking advantage of just the fact you're not carrying a notebook around and things like that. But still reaping the benefits of that ink interface. What it really does that, well, it likes it, it doesn't fight with it, it doesn't battle with it, I don't use the digital ink part of it very much. I use text based for my bullet journaling in in OneNote. And the fact that I can create similar to what you were talking about it used to creating cross links between pages makes that normal access to information that's in bullet journaling much easier. It gives me a lot more flexibility to be able to pull back content back. But the setup is very simple. You start with a page, start with a blank page and just start capturing your things down. And then the next day you do another one next day and do another one, you have a table of contents page and you just link to that page accordingly. And you go and you create your connections in your index page. So if you really wanted to get started with bullet journaling in OneNote, it would take maybe 20 minutes to get set up. The trick is sticking with it and using it consistently.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 19:21

I found the whole experience of setting up the bullet journal to be it was different the first few times because I thought to myself, and then plus I was I was setting up for purposes of showing other people. So I was every time I did it, I learned a little bit more about the way in which you would optimally set up the bullet journal in a system and the instructional content that's out there about the bullet journal, I think tends to go very deeply into other people's views on productivity. And of course I tried to stick to writer Carol's views, both that he illustrates On his website, but also that he wrote in the bullet journal method in the book that he wrote about about the methodology, as you said, are if you're really sticking to what Ryder Carroll talks about the set of processes actually very, very quickly, quick. And the most difficult part I guess, is in your monthly log and having to write out the days of the of the month, and then the the dates of the month, and then the and then the weekdays alongside it. And otherwise, then most of the work is actually in thinking about what you're going to actually do, determining what work is going to be done, and identifying those vital few items you are going to tackle on any given day. And so the goal for us now in this segment, is to really talk about what our experiences have been with utilizing the bullet journal, what did you experience? What are the things that people should look out for? And how can we help folks really understand the bullet journal method in some way, shape or form in Confluence with our, our own experiences having utilized it,

A Art Gelwicks 21:06

based on what I've done with it so far, I encourage people to focus on the journal part more than the bullet part, when they're getting started. That's the easiest, that's the way to ease into this as a tool, use it as a capture mechanism, identifying what you've got going on what's

happened, you know, use it as truly the notebook that it is, then once you get comfortable with that process, then you can start getting into the planning part of it, utilizing the bullets to to really start to organize your information a little bit more. But it's, it's something that you have to give yourself time with. And specifically, you may find there are parts of the bullet journal process that you don't normally utilize, like, for example, cross referencing, you may not, you may just not have a lot of reasons to go pull the index and look up everything for a particular topic. But you need to do that, you need to do that periodically just to make sure you're comfortable with it. And consistent with it, we have this thing within the productivity space that we fall back on our tools to remind us of what they can do. The bullet journal won't do that. It won't tell you what's possible, it won't tell you how it works. It's just not part of its functionalities. So if you're going to start with this on a digital platform, on an analog platform, anyplace, I would say start with the journal part first started as a post activity capture an organization and then ease into the planning parts of it.

A Augusto Pinaud 22:36

I actually I even have a client who who use it. But he's, I think one of the things that it took me a while to understand I have tried to implement the idea. I'd like the idea of the bullet journal. But it was not really until this test that I understood what were the obstacles, you know, and one of the obstacles is the speed. And I'm not saying that I move fast, but I like the illusion of moving fast. I have high input, okay, and processing that high input and organize it and all this really make a joke for me. So I think if you had a much slower pace of input and volume, it is a great tool. And as I said, I have a client who we implements a real estate agent and to give the specifics that I can and we implement the bullet journal. And for this person, it works incredibly well. Because all the checklists are there that he needs. And we create those checklists. And we create, you know, they open things, he created the closest things and he can move on organize his experience, even even in paper and have a fantastic record. And every year, he has started a new one. That's that, again, my experience wasn't as positive as I wish,

F Francis Wade 23:58

I think the challenge I'm having is looking for the possibility of anything that can scale. And as I think of writing and rewriting and rewriting tasks that get carried on from one week to the other. As you mentioned volume and speed. I think it's a good system for when you're managing a low number of tasks. As you get up into the hundreds, they just can be no rewriting and rewriting of subject of tasks each week and your is easy to carry on. And simply manage them using a tool. And if there really are tasks that you do not want to let go of and do not want to delete from memory and void. Then the bullet journal fast become more I think past becomes a problem if you're in paper, if you're going digital as a different story because no no you could Yeah and that's fine. Are

A Art Gelwicks 25:01

we. And that's exactly the case. I mean, when you have to make that dividing line, if you want something like this to scale, I'm firmly of the opinion, it has to be digital. I can't see any way that it scales on paper, I love my paper just as much as anybody else. But I just don't see it flying on on a paper based solution. Now, that said, we talked about this task management,

that's always been a rub for this thing. Specifically, people will say, because they start to look at bullet journaling, and they go, okay, so it's supposed to be my calendar, it's supposed to be my notebook, it's supposed to be my activity listing, it's supposed to be my Task Manager. And well, how do I handle things like, you know, recurring tasks? Well, on paper, which is what this is based on, you don't, there is no recurring tasks, the notebooks not going to stand there, jump up and down and say, hey, you need to do this today, which is something that we look at our systems and go, well, our system should tell us this. Yeah, it's it's not a thing. However, things like those tasks, you can leverage many of these platforms. Unfortunately, that's one of the things one doesn't do is task management. But many of the other systems, including things like workflowy, the ability to go through and set flags and tasks and have those reminded and have that integrated into your bullet journal is where this can truly scale where you can start to move it. And when we think about moving tasks from day to day, I have, I've set this up in workflowy. Before, because it's an outline based model. And literally, when I have a day section in my bullet journal, I'll have Incomplete Tasks. And I'll have another section complete tasks. And as I complete tasks, I actually just drag them from one to the next, I drag them from block to block. And the reason being is to deal just with what your problem you were mentioning, Francis, which is to be able to take at the end of the day, all those tasks that didn't get done, and move them intact to the next day. That by doing that little modification and structure, it meant that at the end of the day, I could just pick up move to the next day and then process accordingly. that fit within that tool, it doesn't work quite as well, in something like a OneNote, where you're dealing with separate pages, you really have to look at your platform. And we've talked about this before, the most powerful productivity step you can take is learning your tools. I mean, we talk about methodologies and approaches all the time. But if you know your tool, inside out and sideways, you can make pretty much any methodology work in it, you can figure out ways to get to that point. And this is one of those examples, there's about eight different ways you can work around the challenge, none of them perfect. But you can get to that point of being able to balance that process if you're comfortable with your tool. But again, that's, that's really part of the challenge is that people will dive into things, they look at a bullet journal and say, oh, okay, so this is going to solve my problems. No, this is going to introduce a whole new set of problems, and it may eliminate some of the others or help mitigate. So I don't think it's going to be, you know, wiping the slate clean.

A   Art Gelwicks   28:21

It also doesn't have to be a permanent thing. And bullet journaling kind of gets this rap every so often that it's a life commitment. That, you know, once I start this, I should always bullet journal, no, I've seen I have literally done bullet journals for a specific project. That's it, that's what its purpose is, is to maintain and track the information for that particular activity. I use the same structures, I use the same methodology and approach table of contents, index cross cross reference, it's perfect for that. Because you're creating, for lack of a better term, you create a reference book for whatever that thing is. And you have all of that together. I mean, if we think about it, we think about bullet journaling, like a nonfiction book. It's a perfect analogy, because you have that table of contents, the reference things for all the material that you put together, you have the index at the back to allow you to jump to that content. That's exactly what we're asking our systems to do so often. You know, if we're managing a project in one of our note taking systems, we expect it to be able to do that. And here's the funny part is we get lazy about the table of contents and index part. Because we go well, I'll just search. I'll just use search technology and have it give me stuff back. But searching only works if you know what you're searching for. And you have the proper context and you have the proper syntax. But this type of a structure really can teach you how to organize your thinking in your notes in any

other system. So even though you might not be implementing a pure bullet journal, or even remotely pure, I mean, it could be as basic as you get. Just that core thought process can help you improve your own systems, especially around note taking, and especially when you deal with scale, because when we don't think about it as better analogy is, if you think about, like, the old encyclopedias that we used to have World Book Encyclopedia Encyclopedia Britannica, it wasn't one big book, it was smaller collections around topics, and it was alphabetically based to make it easy to find, but it it aggregated around that concept. And if you start to think about your own content, and say, Well, what if what if, instead of a big bullet journal, I had little journals around the topics, now, it almost gets easier, because then you can create a master index for all of those books, you know, books sections, if, like I said, project management, if I'm managing multiple projects, I may have a bolt, a journal, bullet journal for each project, but I'm going to have a master index that's going to allow me to go through and say, okay, and all of these, how do I look up? You know, we're all the project plans. It's absolutely doable. Is it optimal? Probably not. There's other ways to do it. You know, somebody will jump up and down, or it should be automated, yeah, okay, fine. But it's doable. And that's the thing, that's where this can give you an opportunity to play. And I would say that this is probably the one system that I've seen, especially on the OneNote side, that has the greatest level of personal creativity applied to its implementations. If you ever, if you ever want to chuckle and see how intimidating this can actually be, go into something like Pinterest, and look for bullet journal templates, you're gonna find some of the most visually beautiful templates you've ever seen done in the digital space, layouts, designs, digitally inked, I mean, artisans are actually doing these things and selling them, they look fantastic. I don't know of any other system that has, I'll say

Raymond Sidney-Smith 32:07

that, from my experience, I am a functional person, I do not have any interest in the in the visual, artistic creativity, part of the bullet journal, my understanding of writer Carroll, his whole goal of being a designer, of course, he enjoys the aesthetics, but his implementation looks fairly minimalist in that way. And he even sells a bullet journal notebook, it seems fairly standard business, minimal design, aesthetic, the way in which I experienced the bullet journal to Francis's point about scale of volume of being able to move things in Evernote, at least I was able to, because Evernote allows you to be able to select items and move them that you've written, you know, so I can, I could just circle a set of tasks, I can just move those, you know, cut them and then move them elsewhere, that didn't actually slow me down in the sense of, okay, these are things that are undone today. And I want to put them on tomorrow, or I want to put them on the monthly log for next month, because I plan to do them in some subsequent period. That actually wasn't as difficult. The challenge was, was that if you were thinking through this methodology, which was that you have to kind of pare down, because of your handwriting, everything, you're forced to filter to the to that those few core things you want to achieve.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 33:35

That's the whole point of of you writing and using handwriting. And you can use the technology, of course to overcome some of that. But then it kind of competes with those issues. So if you're having challenges, accomplishing what you will consider important goals, then I would suggest not utilizing the technological trickery, I suppose that is capable in say, in Evernote, or

OneNote, or any other tool like good notes, or notability, and whatnot that allows you to really speed up some of these pieces, the whole point of the of the methodology is to be able to slow down to be able to think through whether or not that thing is important enough to move to the subsequent week, day, week, month, year, whatever. And so that part of it was actually really interesting for me, I don't have that problem. I don't have that challenge. But I know that if you are experiencing that, that is something you should keep in mind is that the speed and efficiency of being able to move tasks from one place to another doesn't mean that the task is supposed to be moved, you know, you may not and should not do that thing in deference to focus. And that is focusing on a better greater goal. And so I found that part to be quite unique for me, which is that I did have the speed of being able to move, you know, sometimes dozens of tasks at once over you know, doing The ones that were useless even, you know, would sometimes just copy the entire sheet. And, you know, these higher sketchnote, copied over to the next day, and then delete the date retitle the date, delete the ones that I've completed. And then I have basically today's set of tasks to do, because they're yesterday's moved over. And that that wasn't at that much of an issue, I did find the problem to be a little bit more adverse. In the rocket book notebook, I have one of the Rocketbook Everlast notebooks. Now they're called core smart notebooks, I think is what Staples has made them. But either way, I using the rocket book notebook that did force me to do the manual process. So I ran the system through Evernote solely and then inside the rocket book connected to Evernote. And in the manual process of having to, in essence, copy paste, you know, from day to day, each of the tasks to the page, it just seemed menial. To me, it didn't seem like it benefited me in any way, shape, or form. Because I do a weekly review in the Getting Things Done methodology perspective, I know that every task I put on my list is important there, there's no reason for me to have put it on my list to accomplish if it wasn't going to be done, and shouldn't have been done. And so those things that are on Sunday, maybe on Sunday may be great. But the things that I put on to and into the notebook I planned to accomplish. For me, I always have a week's worth of tasks allotted in my system. And so it just seemed weird because I had to put, in essence, everything I plan to accomplish, and then moving it from day to day. And that was a little bit of a challenge for me purely because I was used to doing it used to putting everything that I was going to do there. I think that in a future implementation, I would attempt to try and meter out what I was going to accomplish on any given day. Again, that that just seems counterproductive to me, I just That's not how I operate, I operate based on what is going on in my week, and what can I accomplish at any given time based on context. So if I'm able to accomplish these five things, today, I'm gonna go ahead and do that. And this is a little bit of a breakdown in the way in which the system is structured and the way in which I actually work. I mean, my work style just doesn't match the the way in which you would have a single day with single sets of tasks. It just doesn't, doesn't fly for me. But either way, the one good part about the rocket book is that it can OCR pages. So what I was doing then was when I felt like it was tripping me up, I would just scan the page using the rocket book notebook, it would grab all of the text from the page. And now I would have everything that I wrote down, basically in text. So then I could just copy that into my Task Manager. And go from there, the and I did, I did actually give up on on utilizing the system at points in my experiment, because I just had too much work going on. And it was slowing me down in that in that in that sense. I will say that if you were attempting to implement this in a complete virtual environment with just the Evernote notebook, I think that that becomes a very interesting project in and of itself. And the experience I had was that I didn't have a problem finding things. So if you are concerned about implementing this, and it sounds like a bullet journal is something that will work for you. I wouldn't worry so much about that the search facility within the digital environment is actually quite competent, I was able to find everything that I wanted to find at any given time. Now again, I do have pretty good penmanship. And so and I was you know, using manuscripts, not cursive in in writing everything into both the Evernote environment and into rocket book. So I

wasn't using cursive, so therefore, it was able to index and transcribe everything pretty cleanly. If you do have, you know poor penmanship, or you know, you're writing in cursive, that might make it a little bit more difficult for the system to be able to search and find those things. So be keep that in mind as well. It doesn't pick up shorthand, for example, so I couldn't write in shorthand and and so there's the things that just are limitations of OCR technology. Today.

F Francis Wade 39:19

I'm picking up on a benefit of managing tasks by writing and rewriting rewriting is that you're, you're always contending with where you're at and what you want to complete, what you want to move forward as incomplete. In a system like the one I use a task management system, the completion of a task is not coupled with the system itself. There is no easy way for me to check off a task and haven't had the system know it without logging into the system and telling it completely. Which is onerous, so of course I don't do it. I end up therefore we've passed a task list that has stopped that I've already done. Stuff that I know realize I don't need to do and stop that I need to do. And now I have to, I am no thinking at the back in a time each week when I go and just bring my class managers motivate. But bullet journal takes care of that, because you're ongoingly contending with what's in that list. I think the designers of past management systems haven't. So for the ones I know, haven't thought of that benefit, and how to help the user to keep their task management system as up to date as possible. So there's no, there's no metric that I've ever seen that measures. But gives you gives the user an idea of how applicable I guess, the tasks are, that are in their system, how relevant they they remain. Whereas in blue journal, you're always running at the 100% rentable, because of its structure. And it was the lesson there for for designers.

A Art Gelwicks 41:07

Well, and that's a really important aspect to it. Because you are forcing yourself or giving yourself the opportunity to evaluate a task every time you're transcribing it to a new location, or you're updating it into the next day, you actually have an opportunity to say, Do I even need to transcribe this? Do I still need to do this thing? Is it what it was before. And I think that's one of the downside of many task management systems, his task management systems are often where tasks go go to die, they get into that system, and they just sit there and they get rolled forward and rolled forward. And eventually it's like that, because that thing going in there, I went through my system this weekend, I'm like, I still have a task for that. I don't even have that thing anymore. Because we don't think about it. But yet, if we are the deciding factor, we are the controlling factor, rather than abdicating that to an automation, we maintain that point of contact with all those activities. And we talked about it earlier about the whole idea of velocity. I think it's a bigger topic to discuss, I think many of our tools create a velocity that makes them unmanageable. It's a velocity that leaves us behind and leaves us out of the actual process. And having that time, it's it's one of the things you'll see when you read about your the bullet journal is that it's also a very mindful activity, you're spending time interacting with the system you're working, you're manipulating it. I draw a parallel, if you think about somebody who's using a power tool, or a salt, you know, a power saw to cut a two by four versus a handsaw. Yeah, you're gonna cut a lot more two by fours, but that power, so but that handsaw is a mindful activity, every stroke, you are consciously making every cut you are consciously making. And it requires you to be aware of what you're doing, rather than letting it fly on its own. And I think for many people, that's a really good approach. It's a way to get out

from under that, oh, I need to, you know, keep the firehose at full output. Probably not. You're just feeding, you know, you're getting fed into the common misnomer of this. And what so many individuals and management have decided to do is like, Oh, you're not doing enough. So so. And this may be a way to ask that question and answer it

F Francis Wade 43:35

being facetious, hydrocotyle, four finger with a hands off.

A Art Gelwicks 43:39

Not that I haven't tried. But you're right, it does take effort. It's usually a much smaller cut, but you feel much dumber about it. So

A Augusto Pinaud 43:47

no, but I think I think you've made an incredible analogy. It's what is your style? Okay, did you one round machine cutter that you can push work through that thing, you know, really, really fast, or you are more the person who need to know that every effort even if it seems like it's going to take a lot more time and effort to cut that piece of wood, right? Like that, you know, that detail and like to know that level of precision. And that was a great description for me are a great analogy for me to what this is my system the fastest they go to the, to the to the cutter, the happier they will make me but if you want that level of detail that more artists and you know his style, the bullet journal will work like nothing else.

A Art Gelwicks 44:43

Yeah, there's definitely a point of if I carry that analogy a little further if we think about it like a furniture analogy. If you go to a place like Ikea you go because you want the stuff you want to set it up. You want to be working on it. That's it You There isn't a lot of nuance to it. But yet, you still have that longing for that wonderfully handcrafted banker's desk that looks so beautiful, and you know, like deep mahogany. That's the kind of thing. And I don't want to say that, you know, everything should be that big and profound, there's a benefit to both parts of this. But if we think about that, and we give ourselves the opportunity to not only be the machinist, but also the artisan, then we need to look at systems that also give us that capability as well. And the last thing I want to throw out with the bullet journal is, don't think you have to use just the bullet journal, you can bullet journal in your own systems, you can use these types of approaches and methodology, steal the best thoughts of it and integrate it into your own mechanisms. So that it works. I mean, if you think about, you know, we're talking about tasks or planning out a project, one of the things you may plan at is to have a journal that goes along with it. If you're, if you're doing a home improvement, you may want to work a journal into that so that you've got that approach to organize that information, make it part of your own. And Ryder Carroll says that flat out in the in the beginning of his book, he makes no bones about the fact that this is designed to be customized. This is not a locked down system,

make it your own. And he he encourages that every time he talks about it. And I think it's the same thing here. We have to think about this and say, Okay, what are the things in bullet journal that can benefit me?

Raymond Sidney-Smith 46:42

I've used signifiers for years and years in my own system. And so I'm glad to see other people embracing it. And I think absolutely whatever works is what you should use. And so thank you, gentlemen, this has been a great conversation about the bullet journal. As I noted at the top, we have three different types of productivity labs, that we want to really have discussions around on ProductivityCast tools, methods, and research. And this is one of our methods, discussions, and I'm sure we will have more tools and research conversations upcoming in the near future. While we're at the end of our discussion, the conversation doesn't have to stop here, you have a question or a comment about what we've discussed during this cast. Feel free to visit our episode page on ProductivityCast dotnet. There are on the podcast website at the bottom of the page, you can leave a comment or question. By the way, I noted at the top of the episode that we discussed episode 35 and episode 73 about the bullet journal already. And to get to those episodes, you would just go to productivity cast dotnet forward slash 035 to get to the first episode all about the bullet journal. And then to get to Episode 73. You also go to productivity cast dotnet forward slash 075. And so that really helps you speed up getting to and from episodes there on the podcast website. If you're in your podcast app of choice, you can go ahead and just search for bullet journal and productivity cast and you'll likely find that those episodes that we discussed. If you have a topic about personal productivity that you'd like us to discuss on a future cast, feel free to visit ProductivityCast dotnet forward slash contact. You can leave a typewritten message is typing a message and hitting send or you can go ahead and voice record a message there's a microphone that will appear on the screen you click on it. And I think you have up to a minute minute and a half to be able to record a message we might use that in a future episode. I want to express my thanks to Augusto Pinaud Francis Wade and art Gelwicks for joining me here on ProductivityCast Each week, you can learn more about them and their work by visiting productivitycast.net I'm Ray Sidney-Smith and on behalf of all of us here at ProductivityCast Here's your productive life.

Voiceover Artist 48:44

That's it for this productivity cast, the weekly show about all things productivity with your hosts Ray Sidney-Smith and a Gousto pinout with Francis Wade and art Gelwicks