139-subjective-vs-objective-time-productivitycast
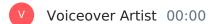
📅 Sun, Mar 12, 2023 3:34AM 🕐 48:55

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 Augusto Pinaud 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.

Augusto Pinaud 00:23

I'm Augusto Pinaud.

Francis Wade 00:24

I'm Francis Wade.

Art Gelwicks 00:25

And I'm Art Gelwicks.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 00:26

Welcome, gentlemen, and welcome to ProductivityCast. Welcome to our listeners. Today, we are going to be talking about objective versus subjective time. And we will be trying to objectively thinking about whether or not it actually even exists. So, for instance, do you want to open this up with regard to this article. So basically, this is an article from hbr.org. And actually, Brian Clark in personal productivity club had brought this to my attention. And the article is my fixation on time management almost broke me by Abby J. Ship. She is a PhD researcher at Texas Christian University. And she has a PhD in organizational behavior from University of North Carolina. And so her research focuses on the subjective and psychological experience of time, including what she's quoting here as the trajectories of work experiences fit satisfaction and burnout, for example, and the nature of mental time travel and attention, and how individual views of time impact performance, well being and coordination in organizations. And so very interesting area of research that she does. Francis, can you open us up in terms of what Dr. Ship talks about? In this article?

Francis Wade 01:36

The topic of the article is my fixation on time management almost broke me. So it's a bit click Beatty, in the sense that you're thinking that she's talking about what everyone is talking about the respect to time management. But those of us who are in the know, you know, that you probably would want to what version of time management is she talking about? And how did it break her. So just in the way this article starts, I'm just gonna talk about the start for a moment. She's define time management in a particular way. She's claimed that the way that she relates to time management broke her. And she's, in a way blaming time management. And I think there's huge problems just with that she gets them to other more realistic things in the latter part of the article, but the context of it, I don't know if the, you know, you write articles, and then the editor decides what's the sexy part that will draw people in? Well, the sexy part that drew people in through the title is just way off base. And why well, I wrote an article can time be managed, and really looked at whether or not this is a reality or a construct in language. And I came away with the latter. So for her to go this far down the road without defining time management is a huge problem for those of us who care, both definitions like this and why they matter.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 03:02

Yeah. So I think about this from the perspective that what she's really saying is that because she became hyperbolic with regard to her own use of time management methods, right? She she basically had this obtuse view that she could do more and more and more not hitting upper limit, and or have unhealthy behavioral interventions, and then presume that those are time management. I just, this is where I have I struggled with her lead up to it, which is that there is this sense, and I think it's an unhealthy sense that many of us have, and I don't think she's out of the ordinary here. I think there there are other folks who are highly productivity minded, ourselves included, who get to a point, and we feel productive, and we think, well, we can be more productive, we could do, we could do that much more, and then it becomes unhealthy. And that actually drives us to spend more time on trying to iron out these small inefficiencies potentially, or small in effectiveness components of our world. And that ends up spending more time and being more deleterious to our outcomes and to our health and not so I get that I

understand the argument, but that is not because of the time management methods themselves. That is a that is a psychological behavioral component, not an issue of the methodologies or the technologies themselves. Anyone else agree or disagree?

Art Gelwicks 04:33

But should the methodologies take that into consideration? No,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 04:37

I don't think so. Like okay, so Jerry Seinfeld is supposed to be the progenitor of the don't break the chain, time management methodology, where you cross off the items on the calendar in a mechanism to chain together and therefore create momentum around getting something done. Why is it his responsibility to then take into account all of the various psychological capabilities that we have and limitations that we have, when it comes to this, when, in reality, he just proffered what he does. He didn't say, there's some great psychological underpinning here, he didn't say there was some great, you know, amount of, of, you know, grand, whatever. He just basically said, This is what I do, it works for me. And it was taken and run with it. You know, and many other people have now talked about it about him, because he's a famous comedian, and so on and so forth. So like, I just don't see the the opportunity there for him to have given this underpinning, you know, he didn't write a book about it, he didn't do anything. But you know, what, don't break the chain helps. How many 1000s of people every year, get things done?

Art Gelwicks 05:44

Is there any reason to not do it, though? I mean, if you have the opportunity to take consideration of the subjective parts of how you're executing your productivity into consideration and compensate for them adjust or at least be prepared for them, does that not inherently make a better system for yourself? I mean, I think about things like you know, when you have something on your list that you're going to do, and you know, it's going to take you two, three hours to do it. And it's something you hate to do. You know, it's going to feel like it takes forever to get that completed. Well, that's perception. It has nothing to do with how long it actually takes it to get done. But it might, because if you don't want to do it, who says you're going to do it at your maximum speed, your maximum level of productivity, the odds are extremely good, you're not. So failing to take that into consideration, at least personally, sets us up in situations where I can understand the struggle that she's talking about. I don't agree with everything in the article, but I do understand the concept and the struggle that she's talking about. Where's the cap? I mean, we started talking about that at the beginning. Where's the top end of productivity? If I feel like I'm hitting? No, I'm hitting everything on my task list. And I'm getting my stuff done. And my projects are getting turned in? Should I stop there? Time management methodologies and productivity, you know? Everybody running around right now will go well, no, you need to work harder. You need to work harder, you can work harder, you're getting everything done. That means you can do more. And I can understand why that would break somebody. I can totally get that. Because there is no sense as to where does this thing go off the rails? And without that taken into consideration? Yeah, there isn't a methodology out there that says you've done enough stop. If there is, I don't know about it. I'd love to hear it if there is but I don't know of one that says, Yeah, you're good.

And I don't think I agree with you there. I don't think there is one and it is an issue that you find into a lot of people, okay? Where, and I found that especially in people who

A Augusto Pinaud 08:13

chlorin to extremes, okay, who they are beginning to personal productivity, okay. And then now they went from this disorganization mode to a more structure one, okay. And they start building their system, and they're now getting some stuff, and are okay, I'm so ineffective. And then I see it on the other extreme, okay, people who has been traditionally, you know, really organized and effective and productive, and then suddenly wants to raise the bar, and then they feel that they're not, and it's not that they are not, if you objectively compare apples to apples, with their own productivity, do you see how they're being more effective, but the problem is, you lose, what is out of the possibilities, the real possibility is 24 hours, how many hours are you sleeping? How many hours are you working? How many hours are you taking self care? And then how many hours are you really working? Okay, because if your list, we look at your list, and we analyze all those tasks and it says you have 96 hours to accomplish those things. Okay, the day is still going to have 24 hours, okay? There is only one feeling at the end of the day failure. And it's a problem with productivity. No, it is a problem that we tend to start taking and taking and taking it because we can process them. We begin to feel that we are invincible that we can take whatever it takes. And at some point we miss into go into calibration said that isn't the problem is not that I have this 1000 things on my system. It's I still have 24 hours. So I need to or hire people so I can get 96 desk To download a war, I need to work into my system. So I can only have X amount of hours a day that include sleeping, self care, and many other things. And then what are the number of hours that I'm going to work? Because otherwise, yeah, you get exactly into what this article describes. The system will kill you, if you just go from another tick. Okay, the ticking will eventually killed you. But it kills you because we tend to forget, where are those hours? And where are those real possibilities. And by the way, I'm guilty as charged

F Francis Wade 10:40

with what's behind what you're seeing. Gousto is a sense of being responsible for your actions. The first part of this article makes it sound as if time management did it to her. Like there's this thing out there that came in and did this thing to me. But the truth and the fact that when you get past the fact that there is she doesn't define time management and tank can't be managed. And time management is only a psychological object. It's not a physical object, like walking in arena and getting wet. Psychological objects can always be reinterpreted, wherever, whichever way we want. And that's what she's done. She's according to rage. She's taking this hyperbolic definition, set it up as the boogeyman and said look at the boogeyman did it to me, this is the first part of the article. I'm just saying she did this. And I agree people can do this all day long. But you can do with anything you can you could say, look at marriage that to me, Weren't you there in the marriage at some point? No did it to me. There is nothing out there. When it comes to psychological objects that don't do things to us. We're the ones who define them. And if we define them, well, we get the benefits of it, find them poorly, we suffer. But we're the ones doing it. It's not it happening to us. But I think her realization later on in the

article was that her she didn't say it this way. But her definition was wrong. And she didn't actually say that throughout the whole article. But she at least added to her understanding and said, we'll get into it the second part of the article, but the first part and the clickbait clickbait comes from this weird place that if you start just start to read it, you're like what time management did something there or poor thing,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 12:25

I'm going to put a link to this folks in the show notes, which is a WebMD article on victim mentality. And, you know, the the beginning of the article really does structure around this. And she prefaces it that way, on purpose, I think for a goal of being able to draw the reader in. And so I think I think this was I don't know if it's purposeful, but I think she did, she did put this in that perspective. And I think it's helpful just for people just to kind of understand where she's coming from, in that perspective, art go for it,

A Art Gelwicks 12:55

I'm gonna flat out disagree with you there, the victim mentality thing is a bad excuse. Don't use that as a standing point. Don't use that as an argument, because it's not victim mentality. If you go through and you look at all these methodologies that are pushed and promoted, and everything I'll take, you know, GTD is a perfect example, if you're not working at your maximum volume, you're not productive. And that is the message that is continually delivered. You look at productivity, anywhere on like, tick tock, Instagram, anything like that. That's the message, how many posts have you seen around productivity hacks, that you're not if you don't do this, you're not being productive enough, you're not getting enough out of your day, you're not being a good enough person. That's that reinforcement that is that constant message that has been pounded on people. So even if you start down that path, no matter how far down that path, you're not far enough, yet. That's the message. So if we say that people are taking this from a victim mindset, I'm sorry, they're not they're getting abused by the system half of the time. Because no matter how far down the process, you go, you're not far enough, yet, you will never be productive enough. I challenge you to look at half of the posts out there and tell me which one will tell you where you're going to be productive enough, you are now successful,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 14:12

we definitely have popular literature and popular discussions on the blogosphere and whatnot, that do push this notion that you have to do more, be more, otherwise, you're not good enough. I don't take that too. Again, anything related to the time management methodologies themselves. This is a this is a problem with society and culture. I mean, the idea that we have workaholism that we have any of those things is not because a time management method was created. We could potentially blame that on the industrial agent and the concept that humans are widgets, or widget creators, and if we if we mechanize we continue to think about humans as being machines. And we talk about our brains as computers and so on and so forth. Right these, this this notion that somehow we are not biological creatures is that we're not animals, in essence that are meant to have rest and meant to have leisurely lives or those kinds of things, right? We just, we divorce those pieces. And then we presume that we should just

basically turn every ounce out of people in terms of energy. It's up to us, and it's wrong. But But conceding that point, the article still does preface this as being, you know, somehow the methodologies fault. And I think that's where I make the clear dividing line. And I

A Art Gelwicks 15:31

go back to my basic point, show me one methodology, just one that tells me I was productive today that I was successfully productive today. I have yet to find what if you can tell me where in what methodology I can sit down at the end of the day, and the methodology will tell me yes, you were productive today. There's nothing objective to that. That is your subjective assessment. And if she is subjectively saying that these time management methodologies failed me, because I never felt like I was being productive. That's I'm not going to fault the methodologies for not taking that in consideration. But I'm saying this is a real thing. This is the reason why we have this entire freaking industry. Because if this was not the case, everybody just pick a methodology and chug right through. But it's the people part of the equation.

F Francis Wade 16:27

I tell them to their art a little bit, because if he said that we wouldn't be having this discussion, because she didn't actually say what you said, I wish she did it, because then we could say, oh, empirically, she tried this methodology, A, B, and C, and it failed. And it didn't work for her. But she's going way beyond that. And as Ray said, being hyperbolic, and saying, time management did something to me this. And she didn't name any methodology, she basically said, my way of trying to manage my time, should even say that she said it time management did something over here to me. Like she separated herself from her own practices, label the practices and call them time management and said, time management did it to me, that's a little bit like some people I know who blame their blame David Allen, for all these things that David Allen never said, doesn't propose. David Allen wants you to have peace of mind at the end of the day. And that's what he really wants. That's a whole point of his book. But I've seen people critique his book and say, Oh, you're telling us to do this. And if we're not doing that, and we're not doing that, but that's not what he said. That's not what this methodology is about. And she, she loves everything together and says, time management did it to me, and she's not talking methodologies. If she were, we'd have to be having a different conversation. But that's

A Art Gelwicks 17:47

okay. I mean, let's be realistic. Let's be realistic about it. If she were to pick out a specific methodology and say this one didn't work for me, what would be the general community reaction, you chose wrong methodology that doesn't move the marker that doesn't open this discussion up. Not one person listening to this podcast, or even on this podcast, has not been frustrated with a methodology at some point in time. Every methodology we've all gone through, at some point in time has frustrated us. It is annoyed us it has made us look at alternatives. So yes, making the blanket statement that time management failed me and did something to me. I'll make the argument. Time management methodologies opened my eyes to the realization that there isn't a Maillot methodology out there that works,

Augusto Pinaud 18:38

good to bring a parallel to this, okay. And I'm going to bring this trend that we have into minimalism and reducing and frugality and reducing the expense. Okay, I'm going to bring that for a second, okay? And you read all this, okay? And you are going to find the same thing. Okay. The people who find and I have found one person who talks about a concept is names from it's at the ends Ramit talks about conscious spending instead. And what he said is do is you basically reduce, you know, mercilessly, everything that you don't care for and you maximize expense and fun into what you care for. Okay, that by the way, as I forgot the minimalist concept, it's much better. Again, you get rid of basically a reduced expenses and anything that doesn't bring anything to your life and so you can have really fun and the other thing, productivity is not a lot different than this. The problem is, we are focusing this in the wrong things because we want to have everything okay. When you come and make a statement like time management fail me, okay? is the equivalent to have now two shirts and say, Well, I wanted to have a party, but I don't have anything to wear. Well, yes, of course you have nothing to wear. You now have two shirts you You sell everything on your house, you have an empty house and a shirt. Yes. You have nothing to wear that that's what you did. It's no different than this. And it's no different than in productivity. What is what you want to be productive about it? I'm sorry. I've been coaching people now for a while. Okay, I just want to find one person that when I asked this question, what do you want to be productive? For? They have an answer. By the way, that's one of the things we work on. Okay. Because if you tell me right now, well, what if you don't know what you want to be productive? Sorry, CS Lewis said any you don't know where you're going? any road will do? That's the reality was productivity. If you don't know, why do you want to be more productive for you are always going to find something that is going to need you more productive, and just that's going to break you and just that's going to make you miserable? And yes, you are never going to find that answer of I did well. And that's close for this sideline of minimalism and frugality before we lost people in in the panel, and not the listeners in the panel,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 21:09

I will make no comments on the topic of minimalism, darkness this episode, here's

Art Gelwicks 21:15

a corollary that I don't know if that's the right word or not. But here's something I want to tie into here. The statement that time management has no direct relationship with productivity. You can be have highly managed time and be very unproductive. And you can be very productive and not have a time structure. I'll make that argument. Because I did it yesterday, I had a very productive day, got everything done that I wanted to do. I didn't plan the timeout timeout for anything, I had my checklist of things to get done. But they took as much time as they did. And I was able to progress through them and execute and get everything finished. So there is no direct causality there between managing my time and a productive result. One does help the other,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 22:17

you can't bifurcate the universe from the laws of physics, right?

Art Gelwicks 22:23

But why not? What what is preventing me from doing that? The only piece I took out of that conversation was how long each item would take.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 22:31

Right? Right. But you have all kinds of things going on unconsciously, you have the course of a day, you can't say the sun rising in the sun setting are not aspects of your understanding of both time and, and space time. And those kinds of things, right? We're always aware of those things. It's like an artist who will say like, I can't be bounded by, you know, structure in order to do my art, right? The reality is you still have to be bound by the laws of physics, by by gravity, you know, you have you have structure, even when you are not aware of that structure.

Art Gelwicks 23:05

So it's based on my subjective interpretation of my productivity and progress during the course of the day is it not? Sounds like what this article is talking about,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 23:15

but use the argument of the artist, right? If they were a data just right, or an impressionist, that has no bearing, like the concept of impressionism is a is a is a fact and interpretive fact. Right? We know what what impressionism is, and the artist is saying, I can't paint like an impressionist because of my because of of gravity. That's, that's, you know, like, patently false, right? We know that there are people who are using impressionistic art in modern times and paint Impressionist paintings to say that gravity is, is somehow impacting their ability to create an objective, impressionistic art piece is false. We know that empirically. Right. So like, that's, that's what I'm hearing in terms of the right analogy, and maybe I'm getting it wrong. But what I'm hearing you say, though, is that you can step away from time management, methodology and time management practices. And by virtue of having learned those skills, you don't need all of those things to the letter of the law of that particular or to the canon of that in order to be productive, in order to be productive.

Art Gelwicks 24:28

Let me give you a different analogy for it. To me, it's the difference between training for a marathon and going out for a jog. The objective is the same. Now one is more complex than the other. You have training for a marathon big deal, and all kinds of work to do all kinds of planning to do you know, over multiple periods, going out for a jog or going out for a jog. But I don't apply the same time management construct and same artificial constructs around going out for a jog But yet, once I do that jog, once I go out for that little run, I feel like I was productive. That's what I wanted to do. And I did it. So we get into this, this construct of building these rule sets. And then we feel like everything has to go into those rule sets. Same

thing happens with our tools, we get one of these tools or multiple tools, and then everything's got to go into that tool. And it's got to hold all these structures, and it's got to be able to deal with all these permutations is like, snow, it doesn't, it doesn't have to, it doesn't have to be big and scary. Sometimes things can be little, they can be posted notes and pins. They don't have to be new notion in Salesforce.

F Francis Wade 25:43

But I think this is this is the point we're making. That is the definition of there's a definitional basis problem at the basic of basic of a term like time management, or jogging. It depends on how you define time management. So the way you define time management is that when I made my to do list yesterday, I didn't use time management. However, every time management book has a part on making lists and following them throughout the day. So everyone, most people define time management to include the activity that you that you defined time management separate from the productivity that you've had yesterday, which I think is useful. It's just that your definition is the popular one. And she didn't define what she meant by time management, except to say that here's a bunch of hyperbolic things I was doing. And I'm not calling that time management and under I'm making that the boogeyman and I'm saying that that that, to me, is an order of articles that I've read, which say that time management is no good. And they always start with a definition of time management that is peculiar to the individual. Let's say that. So they build the boogeyman up, they tear it down, and they say, therefore, time management doesn't work, or therefore I should do energy management, therefore, you should focus on your feelings instead, therefore, you should, but it's all a definitional problem. And when there is no clear definition, or in as I would argue, in my paper, can time be managed, when you can't define it. Because time management cannot be managed because it doesn't exist, then we're all talking, we're think we're talking about the same thing. And we're not, which is the point that remain. And I think the example that you gave is true, you know, run out and run 10 marathons. And to say that a marathon is equivalent to jogging can only be true if you're defining true, the aspects that are dissimilar in a peculiar way, because there's a million ways in which they're very different. So it depends on how you define it. And if you define it rigorously, then we can have a conversation. Otherwise, we have to go back to the definition and say, what do we mean by the term, because we're then just comparing apples to oranges. And I think that's a huge problem. In our field of productivity,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 27:52

especially when in productivity, we have very few places where terminology actually is defined, if I say to you, time blocking time, chunking time stacking, or habit stacking many of these terms are, are defined by an individual, and they are not generalizable. And so therefore, you know, we're not really capable of saying everybody defines this term this particular way. And that's a topic for another podcast for another day. But moving along to this secondary notion in the article now, which is subjective versus objective time, what she's what I'm hearing her say, and correct me if I'm, if I'm misinterpreting her. She's talking about subjective time as our interpretation of time time, of course, being something that is a measurement of quantitative measurement. What I'm seeing when I'm reading, what she writes, is that there is a subjective interpretation of of time. And we need to take that into account as it relates to how we deal with our productive days

A Art Gelwicks 28:57

that I agree with completely. I think that is dead on and we've all experienced it, at some point in time, you've been doing something that you really enjoy, and all of a sudden the clock has zoomed past, you know, you allotted two hours for this. And also in the two hours are up, it's like wait, but I was having fun. I was making progress. I feel like I was doing well. I want to do more time, or the flip side of the coin, where it feels like it's taking for ever. You've ever sat through a staff meeting, you know what that's like, so that, that perception is extremely true. It's It's proven out through psychological studies and analyses. How we take that into consideration, though, is a very personal thing in my mind. We have to, we have to be very introspective as to how we view different types of things that we are going to do. aren't that good things to us? Are they bad things to us? Are they boring things? Are they exciting things and be able to take that into consideration? If I think about you Here's things that I enjoy doing, it makes sense to me to expand the amount of time that I'm going to allocate to do them. If for no other reason that I get more personal satisfaction out of doing them during that time period, and if there's things I don't like, well, I want to condense that time down and make sure that I'm as streamlined as possible to get it done and over with. So I agree completely. I think subjective time is a core driver to a lot of this stuff. And I think that's where a lot of methodologies struggle is allowing people that opportunity to work there subjectiveness into the objective measures that are in the system.

F Francis Wade 30:41

And the object, the the so called objective measures. According to the physics, they aren't even objective. Because time, time is a human construct. It's a way of measuring change. And if our listeners have heard of the twin paradox, if you take a couple of twins, put one into orbit for a long enough time and leave the other one here on earth, when you bring them back together, one will be older than the other. Because time has passed differently at the two extremes. So even the physics says that time is subjective. So it's it's all if it's all made up, then we might as well play with it the way art is the way art is saying we might as well say, Okay, well, there's a 1999, and y2k, we thought it was gonna be the end of the world. And it was very limited a problem. But it's a it was a global made up problem, because we all made up that this was 1999. And that there was going to be a turnover of the clock that was going to cause a problem, which was true in the software. But there's no objective reality that that was the year 2000, that was all a human construct. It was all made up, we could have all agreed to let's let's dial it back another 100, a few 100 years if we could have changed a time to any point in time that we wanted to. And there's some societies, some tribes that exists today that don't measure time. They don't they don't have that they don't have constructs around time. And we're taught what time is, as kids, we get to age eight, somebody teaches us what a clock is. And before that, we will know that in Teach us we will have no clue. So it's all subjective. So the idea of playing with our subjectivity, and not accepting the that its objective in any way. If it's all subjective, then we get to play with every aspect of it, including even hard commitments. I think she she mentioned this when somebody, you've made a hard commitment to do something hard. Hard doesn't. Not even 9099 y2k problem was hard. It was just global. But it wasn't hard in the sense that, you know, I take a rock and hit you in the head, that's hard. Because that's a physical reality. She's talking about psychological, psychological experiences, some of which are based in global agreement. But those aren't hard. And I think she's right about that, then there is no hard deadline, hard deadline, no really hard deadline,

Art Gelwicks 33:17

you got hard with a capital H, you know, ones that the world's going to end kind of thing. And then there are ones that everybody has to deal with. I'll take in the corporate space, for example, you're talking about getting something done in the next thing, that manager supervisor, person of authority, turns around and says, Oh, and you can have that done tomorrow, right? That becomes an artificially constructed deadline. It has nothing to do with the quality of the work, the delivery, the execution, none of that. It is just something that was picked for some abstract reason. But now, all of a sudden, time management kicks in, oh, I have eight hours between now and then how can I fit all this in? How can I get more out of this limited, abstract artificial block of intervals. And that's where I think these things start to deconstruct and we have to in the productivity space, we have to start peeling that away. We have to get away from this idea of we just can't think about everything measured in 15 minute increments anymore. We have to think about the quality of it. We have to think about the mental impact on the people doing the work. We have to think about the impact on the organizations and we have to think about the work itself. Is it worth even doing?

Raymond Sidney-Smith 34:42

So the author brings up this new term called temporal schemata. And what she talks about here in the research that's linked to it, she links to an article that she's a co author of with Dr. Hedy a Richardson and the study is called the The impact of temporal schemata understanding when individuals and train versus resist or create temporal structure, and she defines the idea of temporal schemata as basically, quote, unquote, time rules, quoting here, again, fixed views of when things should occur or how long they should last, in the abstract of the research. She called these cognitive frameworks about time. And I find this fascinating, just in general, because it puts a term to something like the fact that she mentions in the article as an example, that meetings should be 30 minutes or 60 minutes long in length. Just as a general rule, we see that because we have calendar tools, that when we place a calendar item in the calendar will typically choose something of an hour's length, and then when we shrink it to a shorter period of time, we typically will choose a 30 minute increment as being the length of those meetings, purely because the software gives us those options, not because of of reality, and that has created an organizational behaviors, that culture just dictates that meetings are 30 minutes, 60 minutes, 90 minutes, two hours, those kinds of things. And of course, we need to resist just because something needs to be a shorter amount of time, that it should only be 30 minutes. And so therefore there's this by layer situation here, which is not just our subjective view of time, but also our subjective view of these temporal schemata. We need to we need to look at time rules within an organization and, and look at them with skepticism, look at them with critical eye so that we can say, Hey, do why should this meeting? Why isn't the meeting 12 minutes long, right. And that way, we can then go ahead and say, if we only need so much time for something, that's a lot the appropriate time to it, and right, match that with the right people so that we're not actually wasting other people's time. And we're not wasting our own. So I feel like there's some really strong argument in the article. Notwithstanding the preface kind of context of the article itself, I find that piece itself to be very, very useful. Any other thoughts related to the subjective, or the interpretive mind as it relates to, if we know that time is time, I mean, at least here on Earth at sea level, time is the same, right? Because if we do do increase elevation, time does dilate, right? Time dilation is real. But here on sea level, where we are, for the most part, time is the same. And we want to be able to manage time effectively. I'm a heavy Time Tracker. I'm also I'm a quantified self, or I track a lot of data about myself. And so I

consider time to be an objective construct, notwithstanding how I perceive what I do in that time. So I purposefully understand and track my time to see how those things differ. So that I can come to some central view on how it is that I spent my time. What do you all do in order to be able to be more effective in the face of the fact that time? Is that ever marching road ahead,

F Francis Wade 38:12

I track my time as well. I wish I had better tools to analyze the data that I've collected. But as a reflective tool, I find it very useful to look back and actually compare what I spent my time on versus what I think I spent my time on or what I intended. So I find that to be to be really useful. Also,

A Art Gelwicks 38:33

I've spent my entire career measuring my Time and Billing for my time. And I've come to the realization that I need to spend less time focusing on how much I can get done during a billable hour. And what does it take to get the work done? That, to me is the linchpin of the entire conversation when when I look at this, and when I talk to anybody about this, when they lay out, what am I what am I going to do to be productive? I'm like, Well, how are you going to know when you were productive? What's the end line? What's the goal line? Then figure out? What's it gonna take to be able to reach that, but don't say, you know, what can I do to be productive in the next two hours? It's, it's the wrong perspective. It's the wrong way of looking at, it's creating an artificial stress that's unnecessary.

F Francis Wade 39:24

I don't know if I agree with that are in that, I think there is value to when you may have a real deadline. So last week, I put on a virtual conference with some very real deadlines. And I had a as you can imagine, it was a massive project with lots of people 1000 people showing up in a particular space because I invited them to be there and implicitly, I promised that everything would be in place for them to be there. You know, having having accepted that and having also committed that and not burnt out in the process. And that those of us who are putting it on would actually enjoy the experience. So committing to that, as well as the hard data, the soft, hard data that we had published. The question then became, which things do we do? In what sequence? And how do we make sure that they get done, because they had to get done in order to accomplish the overall objective? That requires the kind of optimization that you're talking about? I think what you're seeing is that that optimization can't overtake the overall objective, because by itself, optimizing how you create your schedule, or your the schedules that you create means nothing if the larger context isn't very, very firm, or very, very clear. So that's what I hear you saying?

A Art Gelwicks 40:51

Well, no, and I agree with you. And I think we're dancing, we're both answering around the same point, because you didn't say, can I put this conference together in 40 hours, that wasn't your definition, you had a hard date, and you planned out to reach that date that milestone, if it

took you 10 hours, if it took you 60 hours, you were still going to do the work necessary to to achieve that end goal, at the high level of quality that you wanted to deliver. At that point, you would say I was productive. Now, part of that measure may have been to do it in as few hours as possible. So you have time for other things and other activities. And that's completely valid.

F Francis Wade 41:32

But there was a, there was more to it, though, because another angle of it is there were features I had to take out. Because there was not enough time to fit them in. So there's there's also that so I had to add to say no to a bunch of cool stuff. Because I just couldn't, couldn't fit it in so that there was a hard there was a hard reality in there that I couldn't do everything I wanted to do. So I had to make choices and say, Well, you know what, maybe next year, I'd have I could do that. But again, in the overall context. So not burning out having this be fun, having it be peaceful, having that be injurious to or lifestyle and food and well being and

A Art Gelwicks 42:12

so that the difference is that I that I hear is that next year when you do this, you want to do the cool things. So you're going to allocate more time to be able to do that. Or you're going to decide, I'm not going to do those at all. It's not that you're going to try and figure out how to cram the cool things into the same amount of time, you're going to take the historical data, you're going to take your subjective analysis as to how you felt about that execution and having to leave those these pieces out. And you're going to adjust accordingly.

F Francis Wade 42:43

No, I'm going to ask that question. Because here's what I'm going to do. I've already decided this. Interestingly, so the cool thing is in, I'm going to, here's my strategy, I'm gonna have to start earlier, and developing some of them, I'm gonna have to outsource, like, for example, the graphics because I do all the graphics right now I tried outsourcing it this year, didn't find someone who use the tools that I wanted to use, and then gave up. But I would try, I would start earlier to find someone who has the skills. So that we am so outsourcing and starting early are my two strategies for getting in more of the cool things. So in a way I am doing what you're doing. It's just that with more runaway, I can have more options. I can have more choices, strategies that I can put in play,

A Augusto Pinaud 43:29

I think I'm going to agree with and beat the dead horse. But if you don't, I'm just going to quote CS Lewis, if you don't know where you want to go, any road will do. And that applies to productivity 100% If you don't know what you want to do, what is the kind of productivity that you want to have? What is the time that you need for self care? And how do those things, and those little elements are important in your life, you are never going to win that race. There is always one check, you can do one extra check you can do and you don't know what you're looking for. It doesn't matter how many things you can accomplish on that list.

A Art Gelwicks 44:12

For me, it's it's pretty straightforward. Make the time part of your equation, the last piece, answer every other question, What am I doing? Why am I doing it? What's the benefit? What's the personal satisfaction, answer all of those questions, and then go back and say, what's the time it's going to is it going to take for me to hit all those markers. If you don't do that. You're just asking for stress.

A Augusto Pinaud 44:35

Yeah, I actually simplify a version of that and I said plan first, for your recovery time for your free time for your vacation time. Then plan how you're going to protect that time and what you have leftover. Then use it for that. When you plan that way that is contrary of how most people play plan. You are You're going to find a lot more satisfaction,

F Francis Wade 45:02

it takes a certain kind of emotional maturity to put your experience before the mechanics. But I think you guys are right, if if you have the discipline to do it, and the discipline to not forget what you're doing, then the time aspect of it is really just kind of, in a way, don't in the weeds, it's important. But by the time you get to that, if you've already put the others in place, then you will achieve the experience that you want. And ultimately, we want the experience, not just the time optimization, because what does that add up to anyway, in the end, right, so

Raymond Sidney-Smith 45:39

I'll leave us with this, which is the fact that contrary to the to the author of the article, Dr. Ship notes, her views on time management don't actually reject her notion that she wants to be productive. Clearly, she has an interest in being productive, as we all do. And we wouldn't be recording this podcast on this panel. And you wouldn't be listening to us as listeners, if you didn't have interest in your own personal productivity. The goal here then is to figure out how what we are doing impacts what we can do better. And I just ultimately always have landed on the idea that active and passive tracking of time is the best way for us to do that. Our perception of what we are doing is very different than when we track data empirically, and review that reflect upon that. So while what you guys talked about in planning for how we spend our time, we also need to be understanding of the immutability of time, and therefore, figuring out what it is we did so that we can optimize for the future. Past performance, usually begets future performance. And so therefore, if we can change what we've done in the past, and just small ways, we can be more productive. And so I just highly recommend that people think how to track time how to manage the process of figuring out what it is we did, and why did we do it that way? And can we do it a little bit better. And it's not about grand changes. It's these small little incremental changes that really have the most profound impacts on our health and well being, and ultimately, our personal productivity. And so I want to thank you, gentlemen, for the conversation. Thank you all for listening to us, we have a couple of just points before we close out. First and foremost, while this conversation is at its end, we don't have to end it necessarily here just in the audio, we can even extend it into the conversation that happens not only on the podcast episode page on productivitycast.net, but we also have

our community inside personal productivity clubs, you can join that by heading over to productivitycast.net. And you'll find the community link there and you can join us and engage in the conversation, we'd love to have you engage in the conversation with us. Also, while you're on the episode page on productivitycast.net, you'll find our show notes, those have links to the various things we discussed here today. And so there you can link out to them and find all those resources there. We also include text transcripts in both a readable format on the page, and one which you can download as a PDF. So you can have that there as well. You can learn how to subscribe and rate and review us all from productivitycast.net So if you visit the website, you'll see the subscribe tab and it will give instructions on how to do all of those things. And with that I want to express my thanks to Augusto Pinaud, Francis Wade, and Art Gelwicks for joining me here on ProductivityCast this and every week, you can learn about more about them and their work by visiting productivitycast.net as well. I'm Ray Sidney-Smith and on behalf of all of us at ProductivityCast. Here's your productive life.

V Voiceover Artist 48:43

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