

How to Conduct a Mid-Year Review

ProductivityCast – Episode 141

Transcript

Voiceover Artist 0:00

Are you ready to manage your work and personal world better to live a more fulfilling productive life? Then you've come to the right place. Welcome to ProductivityCast the weekly show about all things personal productivity. Here are your hosts, Ray Sidney-Smith and Augusto Pino with Francis Wade and art Gelwicks.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 0:18

Welcome back, everybody to ProductivityCast, the weekly show about all things personal productivity on Ray Sidney-Smith

Augusto Pinaud 0:22

I'm Augusto Pinaud.

Francis Wade 0:24

I'm Francis Wade.

Art Gelwicks 0:26

And I'm Art Gelwicks.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 0:26

Welcome, gentlemen, and welcome to our listeners to this episode of productivity cast. Today, on ProductivityCast, we're going to be talking about stepping away from getting things done for a bit, so we can review and reflect. And what I mean by that is that we're halfway through the year. And this is a really good time for us to discuss the mid year review. A mid year review is a practice like any other reflection activity, where we take time to look over our progress, reevaluate our goals, and really recalibrate our personal productivity systems. It's a moment to pause the back and gain clarity, gain perspective on where we stand in relationship to our aspirations, and how we can make the most of the

second half of our calendar year. So let's talk today about what the [mid-year] review is to each of us on because it may be different. We'll then talk a little bit about why why someone should do a mid year review. And perhaps why not, I mean, there may be some folks who don't do it, and therefore giving some perspective there. And then we'll talk about some of the elements of our own media reviews. And perhaps how you can get started developing your own video review. If you haven't done one before, we're just kicking the tires, and making your mid year review better. So let's talk first about what is a mid year review. I kind of gave a definition in our preamble. But if you want to give some further color to it, what do you think the video review is to you?

Augusto Pinaud 1:53

Okay, we all have, you know, our reticular system activated by the means is our brain is like a scanner. And he's paying attention to what we what we do what we are down, we want to know what direction we're taking. If you don't set that scanner in any direction, well, it doesn't matter, it will scan something, but is that Samsung? What do you want. One of the things that I believe is important is to track that word did you want to go on it is still something that is valid that is interesting is there is nothing wrong in to change the direction. What is wrong is to in my perspective, is to walk aimlessly and just moving and seeing what is happening. So I have been personally on truck and off truck for both. And in my experience on truck is way more fun. So that's part of the reason why I conduct this MC gear reviews and why I work with my clients, the clients that I have coached in to do this review and why I believe is very, very important. It is very simple to lose track. But it's also easy to get back on it.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 3:14

As a sidestep just to clarify for some folks, what Lisa was talking about was the reticular activating system. And so this is a neural network in in our brain, right we have a neural network. And the RAS is responsible for a wide variety of things. And some of those things, of course, are our ability to identify patterns of things. It also regulates our wakefulness, it regulates our ability to basically have a consciousness, motivation, all kinds of other things. It's also the thing that identifies our fight or flight response or flight flight freeze response. And it's really how we perceive the world. So a lot of that RAS is activated, those network of neurons are really activated when we're trying to identify patterns of things. So you know, when we see something that shaped like a lion, moving toward us, whether it's a lion or not, our RAS kicks in, and we start to respond from a biological perspective, right, we prepare for fight or flight, because of our mind, surfacing those stimuli, we get activated for preparation for whatever that thing is. So just want to make sure folks are kind of on the same page when when we talk about the RAS,

Art Gelwicks 4:22

the mid year review, in my estimation is one of those things that becomes a necessary evil for many

people because that they get so involved in the work and doing the work, that they haven't got a running time period, they may not even do weekly reviews of going through and determining where they stand and where things are. I also think it's a bigger review though. It's the it's the review that determines Are you on course, it's not for minor course adjustments, but is your destination the correct destination. So for me, it's always a matter of not only of determining Are you making progress on the goals that you've set Get out. But it's an opportunity to say, okay, based on where the world stands right now, where my world stands right now, are those the right goals? Are those the opportunities that I want to be pursuing are those the objectives that I need to have at this point in time. That's not something you want to do on a weekly basis, because you'll never get out of the analysis mode. But this is very much in my mind, the opportunity to do a strategic analysis of what your goals and objectives are.

Francis Wade 5:30

And I'd be the contrarian here, or the devil's advocate. For a change,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 5:36

surprise, surprise,

Art Gelwicks 5:39

that's my job.

Francis Wade 5:40

I'm taking art putting on our chat for a while, I don't do a video review. And I know that the logical that I should do one. But here's why. I have three kinds of interests in the in our business. And we cover three web three conferences per year, one in productivity, the other one in strategy and another one in Caribbean HR. And they they go from March, March, June, and September. And we have our strategic plan for each one. And we gotten into the practice of updating the strategic plan after each conference. So we're, we don't quite review them because they don't follow the calendar. But we do three rounds of strategic planning each year, to focus on each business. Invariably, for example, the strategic planning conference is coming up this week, probably next week, or the week after, we'll do a review, or we'll do a new plan for the next year. But we'll also review the other plans. So we don't really have a media review. receipts, not a not, not the way that you traditionally think of it, we we do forward planning for each each of the three businesses, so to speak, or interests. And in that we tend to cover the wall cannibal overlook, look over the wall, all three are doing. So not really. But in a way, I guess something similar gets done. This doesn't follow the calendar, that's for sure,

I'll offer a different perspective here, which is not counter to what Francis is talking about. But more from, from my perspective, I am a natural planner. So I could plan all the time, all the all the ways and do nothing, right? That would be my natural state of being. And I recognize that very early on in my life. And I realized that I just love planning, I love the idea of pulling out a Gantt chart, I love sitting down with a mind map and just planning all day long. And that's not how things get done, right. So you have to step away from that planning activity or, or, if you're like me, you have to step away from that to be able to get things done. But that also means that you need to reward yourself for doing the things. And for me having these reviews, both the weekly review and larger reviews gives me the opportunity to it's kind of a reward for doing the work, because my natural desire is to actually just do the planning, right, I want to do the planning, and I want to hand it off to somebody else to be like, You go handle those details, right. But because I've done the work, now I get to sit back and actually do the planning. And that's my reward. So the mid year review specifically, is typically if I'm having a good year, and things are going the way they should be. And then the media review is is really this rewarding space. For me. It's a place where I can enjoy the fruits of what I've worked on. And so often, those of you who are listening, don't give yourself enough credit for the work that you're doing. And we need to step back and just give ourselves a little bit of credit for what we're doing. And I feel like the midterm review is one of those things like throw yourself a little party and have a great time with it because you've worked hard for six months. And I know you're working hard. And if you aren't working hard, this is a really good opportunity to kind of set yourself up for the next six months to work really hard so that you when you get to the next mid year review or the end of your review so to speak, you can you can celebrate, right this gives you that anchor in the sand to be able to to know that you've had a chunk of time, whether you're following the 12 week year and you're going based on those kinds of sprints, or you're doing some larger sprints like I am I do I do pretty much the the 12 week 13 week year kind of concept. I call them sprints and I like those kinds of reviews where I'm I have that timeframe set aside to basically pause, reflect, appreciate the work that I've done and planned for the future. The mid year review is that next level of of celebration in a way it's a milestone for me and my year and it really does help me as a plant Enter, sit back and feel good in some way, shape or form, it's actually a, it's a, it's a rewarding practice for me. And it may be for you as well. Let's talk about why different than Francis, where you have a cadence, where you're where your year is structured in such a way that allows you to plan along the way, why should someone do a mid year review? Why should someone not do a mid year review. And I will start off with the with the primary type of person who probably doesn't need a mid year review. And those are folks who have highly structured calendar years. And so this ends up being something where you have a structured set of reviews that are that are forced upon you. And therefore adding another personal review may be just a little bit too much. If you are doing quarterly reviews. And in essence, your mid year review falls on obviously a quarter, you're just basically doing double the work. So if you feel comfortable with the fact that your quarterly review is basically standing in for your mid year review, then you don't need to do a separate mid year review from the quarterly review, necessarily, right. And that's going to differ per person. So you know, your results may vary here, but I just don't think that I have clients who will come and say, Okay, well, I've done my Quarterly Review, now I'm going to do my video review. And I feel like this should be one in the same, I don't feel like you should try to force yourself to do just a quarter and then also a mid year at

the same time. That is you can do them at the same time, you can just bring those together. For folks where this may be overwhelming that you're looking at too much material at once. This can, this can be something that's just very overwhelming to the system. And therefore you would avoid it and therefore not do as well a review that may be a problem for some folks. So you may want to break that review up into separate constituent parts by life domain, so that it's not as onerous for you as as as it as it can be.

Francis Wade 12:02

But for the ones that I do, it's it's, well, as I said, don't quite do them. But But whenever I sit down to do a, I wouldn't call it a review. And I think this is one of the things that I I recommend to people when they when that comes out of there come from GTD and come from the world of doing a weekly review and have that as their background. There is no planning step in the weekly review, which is to me is a huge, huge missing. The point of sitting down is not just to look back, it's to look forward. So a big part of the review, so to speak, is to readjust, make new plans, set new targets, incorporate lessons learned into what you're doing going forward. And to me that's the point is what's coming next The point is not what just happened. The main point is what's coming next. So the orientation really is towards what do I need to fix, change, adjust. Add in takeouts where my were my goals are unrealistic. Where do they need to be? Or where were they not ambitious enough where they need to scale up? So it's a it's a phase change, you're looking to see do I do I make a phase change at this point, based on my understanding of where I am, versus where I thought I wanted to be or where I wanted to be. So for me, it's looking forward, that's a huge part of the activity. And for me,

Art Gelwicks 13:36

situations change. And a lot of times the change is not under your control. It's an external influence that has come into the equation. And the major media review is the opportunity to look at those changes that affect multiple parts of whatever you're doing. A lot of times we'll be looking at, okay, how does this affect this project? How does this affect that project? But it could be how does this affect me as a whole? How does this affect my availability? My my approach to my work? Could it be that significant of a change. And when you're dealing with things at that altitude, it's sometimes it's difficult to look at them, or to not look at them at the individual project level, because then you start to solve the problem right away. I think mid year review is one of those opportunities to not solve problems, but identify problems to to recognize, as you mentioned earlier, recognize the successful things that you've done and say can I do them again? Can I reproduce this or improve my other operations? But even more so to be able to go through and say, Okay, this is a potential issue. Maybe this is an issue that is coming, rather than has already been here. And now it's starting to show up on the horizon. If you wait to a yearly review, to address those kinds of things. That's often too late. You have not given yourself the opportunity to do Gaston, I always have this mental image of the captain of the Titanic. The equivalency of that yearly review would be seeing the iceberg and actually being able to avoid it. So knowing that you have an opportunity to say, oh, there's an iceberg, maybe we should change direction, rather than waiting until it's too late. And sometimes there aren't. And you go through and you have

that validation to say, yep, everything's on course. Everything's headed the direction it should be. I'm making the progress I should be, all's right with the world and continue on. But this is this is that checkpoint? And I don't think we do ourselves a favor, by not having, at a minimum this mid year. But having frequent checkpoints to say, okay, am I on target, get your head out of the work and look around and make sure you're driving in the right direction.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 15:57

One thing that I think comes up as a thought, from what you're talking about art is the importance of making decisions from a place of call it abundance from a place of calm and collected temperament. The reality is, is that when you come across a problem, like what you're talking about, right, like something's off course, there's an iceberg, and you're, you know, you're very close to it. Maybe you know, the impact is imminent, setting aside some, like safe space for yourself, to think that through like, in the right circumstance, where there wasn't this problem, how would I respond? If I had all the resources in the world? How would I respond, and then kind of working toward reality, as opposed to being in that? Oh, my gosh, I've got the last dollar in the bank, what do I do now? Right? The, that's not the best place to make decisions from, right. And it kind of goes back to my, whenever I have a new business that I'm dealing with, I always educate the small business owner, that they should get a home equity line, they should get a credit line with their bank, they should do all of the stuff for getting good credit available, when they don't need it, right? Because that's when your credit score is going to be your best. It's when the business doesn't have any debt. It's when the business is got the mess, most energy, right, you're an entrepreneur, you're starting your business, you're excited, everybody is excited about the business, then you set that line of credit aside, right, and you have it for a rainy day. Right. That's why you you do this stuff up front. And that's the kind of expansive abundance position that you want to be in when you're doing your mid year review. And I feel like that's the kind of space and place where you want to make good decisions so that when stuff hits the fan, you're able to step back and say, You know what, I had a plan in place. Right? And this is that was the ideal, right? Now, let's work from that ideal to what is reality. But we're making better decisions, because we're not looking at it purely from crisis mode. And the bottom of the barrel, right? We're looking at it from some some better perspective, some some better positioning,

Augusto Pinaud 18:02

really was was was what you said, I think that's what it needs. If you think right now, okay, we're going to be driving from the south to the north of your country, doesn't matter. What is your country? Okay? Unless you will have done that drive every week. Do you need a map? Do you need to check? Hey, are we really interactive? We missed the exit. And it's exactly the same thing you asked. Francis was saying, okay, hey, we drive this in this order. So we always drive in this order that may require a different Chuck, but I instead maybe have been every six months, probably what happened on what was Francis was describing is that at the end of every of this conference comes an evaluation period, what we did, right, why we did wrong, what we need to change or evolve for the next one, and what we can add for the next one. So it's not that he's not doing the review is doing a review in a different way.

In this case, in the case of the people who should do this review, as you were saying, Ray, you do it every 12 weeks for 12 weeks, that works perfectly fine. Okay, that you go every quarter. That's what 13 weeks is, in case you're not aware of that is every 13 weeks, it's a quarter that works fine. If you think on corporations, many corporations go and do that quarterly review where we are. What we tend not to do is to do it in our personal life. And because of that, sometimes we make big things that change. So my kids, I have two little kids still so they just finished school. And well. Can we go business usual? Technically yes. Except that my daughter is now going to high school. My son, it's going now to fifth grade. That Technically for us is the same. But for him, it's not now he's going to be treated as a bigger kid. He's going to get a Chromebook that he needs to be responsible. He and ultimately, I will be responsible. Let's be honest. So that means great. Is his backpack. Okay to carry a Chromebook? And the answer is no by well, because his backpack to keep backpack? So do we need to consider those things or as hardware sitting or wait until that iceberg hit us again, and we need to use the insurance write a check for the new Chromebook, whatever it is, either way, is fine. I, I always said you don't do productivity for the press and you. You do productivity for the future. You you do all these reviews, not for the new right now that you're in right now is where it is. You are doing these six months review? What are the review? For that future self? What can you do today, evaluate today, and review today that will make the life of that future do better, or easier, or more complete. And data for me is the recent of these reviews, doesn't matter if you do them mid year, or you do them every quarter, this thing is you need at some point to disconnect. Okay, go to somewhere that is not your office and look into all these aspects forward. Because if you don't, then you're always on reactive mode, you're always responding to fire, you're always responding to the emergencies instead of work into avoiding them to happen. And that, for me is a big power of all these things.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 22:02

Over the weekend, I had the opportunity to sit down and watch a few YouTube videos that were in my watch later list. And it's voluminous, I don't consider it an injury, I just collect them in there and watch the whenever I have time. And one of the things that I came across was this interesting video, and I'll put it I'll put this in the show notes. If I if I find it. The idea was it was talking about emotions and some of the myths about emotions. And one of the key elements that came out of this particular psychologists perspective was that a we curate the present moment, for our ability to have future emotions that resonate with us in a positive way, I may be mischaracterizing her in just a little bit. But the essence of what I got from it was that, you know, our, our history, or maybe childhood trauma, our childhood experiences, our the relations that we had, as as children, those inform our current and present day emotional landscape. And we can change that by virtue of the by the present moment for our future self. And so we have to consistently think about how we keep well how we curate the present moment, how we curate our present emotional life, so that our future emotional life is better, we would hope and what Augusto is talking about here really touches on that that point a lot, which is that we are benefiting our future self by by basically taking this time now to birth this, this future reality, right, we don't have very much control over the future. We have control maybe over the next few minutes of our lives. And we what we do in the next few minutes determines what happens in the next few hours. And the next few days, the next few months, and the next few years. So what can we

do right now to curate a good life. Right, the good life so to speak, in and for the future. And I think I think that really is an important note here to make when we think about something like a media review. Alright, let's talk about how we might manifest our media reviews or how what elements of our own media reviews are really key or core components of it.

Francis Wade 24:09

I want my media reviews to be like a my weekly cup of coffee. My my most productive Fun Day is at my desk. Our Saturdays when I have my weepy cup. And as a non coffee drinker and apparently I'm and I'm sensitive to coffee eight. By virtue of that, we want to have that cup. I can work until about 8:30pm 9pm and not feel a thing. You know, I could I could just go go go might take a little nap during the day but I you know, it's a long day, but it doesn't feel like feels great. As someone who likes to accomplish a whole lot. I like the feeling of getting a lot accomplished because I'm focused. I don't have interruptions. The copy goes whatever it does, and I feel good all day. I write up the teleport where I hit the hit the sack, I'm feeling like, wow, that was a great day, I would want my weekly review to be like that. It's not, it's not the word review kind of puts me to sleep a little bit. For me, it will be more of an acceleration, my semi annual review. But my my review had wanted to be like a, like a cup of coffee in the sense that it accelerates the rest of the year. So I'm not doing it for the review, I'm doing it for the acceleration, the Jumpstart. So I would, I would, if I were to do one on a regular basis, I would rename it the the acceleration meeting or the the propeller meeting or something that would give me you know, indicate that really what I'm looking for is what Augustus talked about, which is, I'm looking to bring something into the future that if I don't have this meeting that I couldn't bring, so part of that includes the review, but the review is not the point. Hence, my wanting to rename it to something more, more, more accurate or more compelling in terms of the actual outcome, because you could really, you know, you could very well review the the last six months and come away with nothing except either a feeling of accomplishment, a feeling of failure, you could just stop in a review and stop if you thought that was the point. But I prefer to think of the point as this next level of accomplishment, this is exciting, something that's about to start. And the six month, six months review is kind of like the what is kind of like the point where this second start, second half of the year starts. And where I bring all this new stuff into it.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 26:46

I think terminology for purposes of it being both motivating and exciting is important. I think that you know if you need to call it the. So I've I have a dear friend who she didn't like the term weekly review. And so she just calls it the weekly view. Right. And so she she wants to look ahead, and so she calls it the weekly view, I think I think that makes a lot of sense. And so if you want to call this your mid year planning session, you know, mid year acceleration session, whatever you want to call it, I think that makes a lot of sense to make it what you want. Now, of course, I consider any review something that is looking at the past in order to inform my future, I embrace the term review. That doesn't mean that you do and that's okay. So I very much hear what Francis is talking about, name it, whatever you need to name it, in order for you to know that it's the right thing for you.

Augusto Pinaud 27:34

What is important is that it's done, not what you call it, I agree,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 27:38

what are some other core elements of the Week, the weekly, the mid year review, and we can we can go from there. So I'll I'll just name some of the big elements. For me. I always try to make sure that my my video review contains some level of a goals evaluation. And so I want to look at each of the goals and determine that the goals are still the goals that they should be. So just thinking through, what are the goals that I have set out for this year? Or the next few years, right? Because I'm looking at it on a higher horizon here when we're talking about goals. But then I'm looking at my projects, and those are going to be within the year to two years. And so I'm looking at both my projects and my goals. And I'm just doing that kind of kicking the tires on touching base with each of these things, do they need to be changed? Right? Do I need to reevaluate whether or not I'm going to reach one of those goals? And something that I'm not as good at? And I would like to get better at is not? When I when I reevaluate those goals to communicate that to stakeholders, right? It's just making sure that folks know that I've, I've re evaluated, I've chosen not to do it. And many times, I'm not sharing that with other people, or whatever that might be, you know, just feelings of, of not being as productive as I want it to be in that particular year, or whatever it might be. And I'll just like set it aside. And I think it's better for us to just like in a good GTD practice for those of you who are GTD practitioners, right? It's your need to renegotiate and then communicate, right? So you need to make sure that if you're going to renegotiate a commitment that you're going to let people know about that. I think that happens on the higher horizons as well happening on the projects. And the bowls level, I think really does help, especially if you have a spouse or partner, and you want to make sure that they're on the same page as it relates to like, Okay, you gotta buy the house next year. And then you decided, well, no, I'm not going to, that's probably something you should talk about with your spouse or partner, if you've made that internal decision, and you haven't quite shared. So things of that nature. I like to look at performance metrics. And so these performance metrics can be as simple or as complex as you'd like them to be. I take things like the number of captures that I since I can actually track the number of captures I make throughout the year. I then track how many actions I complete. And while those are not the same thing, right? The number of things that come in, many of those get deleted, but the number of actions I complete are also a unit EAC metric. And so I look at those in comparison. So if I'm capturing 100 things a week, and I'm completing 15 to 20 of those next actions on my list, is that the right balance, and then I can look at that kind of on a broader level, on the mid year level, that semi annual review, I can say, Okay, well, I've collected 3000 items in the course of six months, that's not unusual for me, I'm capturing throughout the day, and I've completed roughly about six or 700 next actions than I can, I can understand that I'm on track, like, that's a good, that's a good ratio for me to know that I'm moving toward the things that need to get done in my world, even not knowing the substance of the items, just the numbers can tell me that I'm on track. And that's, that's an important thing for me, you need to figure out what that is for you. Right? It could be the number of projects completed, it could be the number of events that you've

hosted, or the number of meetings that you've attended, or reducing that number of meetings you've attended, which will then increase your discretionary time, and therefore, your productivity, right, like we need to, we need to understand some of these numbers. And we have the data now we have what it's like all there, you know, unless you are completely bullet journaling on paper, and you keep a calendar in the bullet journal, and you have no data whatsoever, somebody else probably has that data systems about you. And therefore you could probably get that data and understand yourself better. So some level of performance metrics can be really useful. This is not all of them. But I'll close on my whole section with just it's, this is a really good time. Just like how David Allen talks about in your weekly review, this is a time to look at your various tools and make sure they're in good working order, I have a tendency to not do that during my weekly review, because I think it's just too often that you're that you're tweaking and trying to play around with your different tools. And so I like to do during my semi annual review, or the mid year review, is this notion of looking at my systems, my daily routine and my tools and spending that time to hone them, right, like, Okay, I have this new webcam, and it's just I'm constantly frustrated by a couple things about it, right? So how do I, how do I optimize my usage of it, you know, like, Okay, I need to make sure that I maybe get another webcam, or maybe I just need to do some tweaking of this webcam so that it's consistently in the right place, and whatever, I need to maybe learn how to use the webcam better, right? Those, there's a lot of moving parts to this webcam. And so I just need to learn how to how to learn, you know, this becomes a project, right, I'm gonna capture that, and it's going to become a project, learn how to use the webcam better. And now now that I knew all the features, now my system is going to be better, because I'm going to be more, I'm going to be less fragile, right, I'm going to be more anti fragile when it comes to operating the webcam in the heat of my day. And so these are the times where we can look at it and say, you know, what, actually, I've been, you know, trying to, you know, do these things in my morning routine, and they just don't flow together, how can I just swap a few things around so that I do them in a better order, and therefore it creates a little less friction for me, and a little less friction, maybe for spouse, partner, the dog, cat, whatever. And so everybody can kind of have a more, you know, fluid day, because, you know, those kinds of just changing, like when you brush your teeth in the morning can be a huge change to your routine, but it can also be a huge benefit. Because it's like, okay, you're taking that, you know, five, six minutes in the bathroom, when your spouse is actually trying to go to the bathroom. And so, you know, it's like, okay, well, if I just move it to a different time, then that person is not frustrated that much in the morning, and little things like that can actually like save a marriage. So, you know, like, think think through these, these these moments, and figure out what you can do to change just little things in your daily routine that can actually give you a great deal of reward. Right? It may be that, you know, like you brush your teeth before you kiss your spouse in the morning. And like little things like that, that can just be a huge, you know, like you think you don't think about those things, because you're just trying to get things done. But a little bit of foresight really goes a long way. So I feel like this is this is the time to think about those things. Because you can say you know what, you know, so and so just complains all the time about x and y, you know that I leave the rubbish, you know, bag by the side of the door in the evenings. You know what I could take that out before I go to bed as opposed to right before the garbage people come? And that's going to make the spouse or partner that means happier that the rubbish isn't sitting there overnight. Right? Who cares? Whether it is or not, right? It's about the fact that you care about your spouse, spouse or partner not being

frustrated by this tiny element. And of course you could change it right? So unless there's a really good reason for you not doing it, like the raccoons get it every day every night, you know, you know, like maybe then you get a garbage can you put it in the garbage can, you know, like, you can figure these things out, but this is the time to think about it right. All the things frustrate you and frustrate the people around you. cuz of the way you live, your idiosyncrasies really affect the bolts, right? And, and so this is the time to really improve those things. And it makes your life easier when other people like being around you. So just something to think about.

Art Gelwicks 35:15

I think this is one of those opportunities when you're looking at your medeor view to decide things to kill off. That's something we don't typically give ourselves permission to do. We'll commit to things, we'll put something on our roadmap, and we let it linger. We hope it'll go away on its own. But there are certain times you just need to say, look, this is not going to happen, I'm not going to do this situation has changed. This is that, that chance to say, look, I'm going to start pruning this list down. And if you want to use that analogy, think about it like a hedge or a tree or something, you're going to go out and you're going to prune it. Why do you do that? Well, one, it makes prettier, but two, it's for the health of that thing. And it's the same thing here, these lingering items, these lingering projects that you have, for some reason decided are no longer going to be part of your mix, need to be pruned off, or else No, you will impact your overall mental health, and the health of your other projects that are going on. I think

Raymond Sidney-Smith 36:11

it's really important to do, and set aside time, whether that be at the beginning or at the end of your media review for basically, pure reflection. And this can be expansive, creative thinking, and just gives you the the opportunity to capture new things. I have a frequent phrase that I use with people, I don't typically say it to their face, but I think it when they say it, which is that when they're like, Oh, I'm bored, I always think that's because you're boring. And while it's not the nicest thing to think it is just a reality, which is that you have been given the opportunity to live in this day and time, and you have all the opportunities available to you in and on the planet. Especially if you're listening to this podcast, right? You're you're you're really given a great opportunity to just live a verdant life, you know, like plant the seeds and, and do do the work and cultivate a life that's worth living. So if you are bored, that's you're not trying hard enough, right? There are so many things to do in the world and on the planet today. And so take them into your review, and capture those things. Like this is the time to think you know, like, if you want to take up a new hobby, if you want to be able to do a thing, there are so many things that you can do, you can fill your time, I know I can, I can fill my time all day with everything but work, right? So there are so many interesting things in the world. I'm constantly fascinated by those things. And so during my semi annual review, I get that opportunity to capture those things. And while I may never do them, right, they they're all going on to that maybe list. The goal is to be able to figure out when you want something new to do you want to have a little bit of, of spice in your life, this is the time to go to that list and look at those things and excise them and see

whether or not that's something that you could you could do. Case in point I have recently decided that I am in like a little bit of a fitness kick in my life right now. And I've always been fit, but I you know, I've just taken it up a notch. But at the same time, I also recognize that at some point in my life, I will want to do things that are a little bit more sedentary. So I've decided to take up birding and birdwatching is the easiest sport in the planet. Just literally just park yourself somewhere and stare. And so, you know, there's all kinds of things that birders do. And I'm sure there's some people who listening that are that are up in arms right now, you know, with all the various you know, they hike and they do great good on you. But for me birding will be finding a spot and parking myself there. And, and just watching what nature brings to me. And the and so, you know, I've been I've been in this process of learning about birding not because I'm going to be doing it immediately. But because over the next, you know, probably 1015 years, I will spend more and more time traveling and doing more in nature, and I want to be able to be prepared for that. And so, you know, a semi annual review is really the right time for you to be able to to start thinking through, well, what does the next few years of my life look like? What did the next, you know, maybe five or 10 years gonna look like? And what can I do now? That can be interesting, that's going to set me up for that type of success. Right? And so I got all the equipment, I got the books, you know, I got all the bonds, you know, book of all the North American birds, you know, and now it's a challenge for me to go ahead and start, you know, checking off the birds I've already seen in life, you know, the common ones, and then thinking through Well, what are the birds that I want to go see and where are they located? Right, and what time of year are they going to be there and what I want to travel to that area in order to see them, right. This gives me a little bit of structure to my year now because I'm like, Okay, well, you know what, I want to be there in October. Wilbur, I want to be there in January, I want to, I want to think about where I want to be traveling. So I can see these particular species, there's something really positive about being able to have something to look forward to. That's not It's not grand. But it's certainly not boring. And so you know, don't be bored. Because it really doesn't make you boring. It makes you less, you know, it makes you less desirous to be around. And I think this is something just to, like, do in any review, whatever it might be, is to think through your levels of gratitude to things. What are you grateful for in life right now. And I think it's a good way to, to end any session to close a particular session, is to just think through what what are you grateful for? What do you appreciate in in about your life, and this is, again, that curating your emotional world for the future. If you think gratitude today, you will have greater emotional regulation tomorrow and the next day and the next day. So really think about what you're grateful for. And you'd be surprised force yourself to do this, like you really think through like, I want to write down 10 things I'm grateful for, at the end of a semiannual review, you'd be surprised at the number of things that you can come up with, that could be very simple, or they could be much larger items. If you do this practice on a semi regular basis, you will feel better about the things you have versus the things that you don't. And if you can want more of what you have and less of what you don't, you're just going to be happier in life. And I'm by no means a minimalist. So I'm not talking about this from a physical goods perspective. But I really mean it from a perspective of just wanting what you have in life and being happy about it, because you never know when you're not going to have it anymore. And that loss aversion will really increase your eudaimonia. And so I could just leave you all with that, with that thought

Francis Wade 41:49

Bond valuable to think in terms of projects, and wherever possible to productize. Commitment, like the one one that you just mentioned to the bird watching, you know, my wife and I have a similar one. No, we both picked up Duolingo. We talked about on a previous episode, there were both Duolingo ing. But so it kind of wasn't started off as a bit of a lark to kind of see what this thing was like. But now we actually have a project, we hope to go to Panama in October. No, it may or may not happen for whatever reason, but it's at least a project. You know, so both of us are sticking to it because we don't want to get there and embarrass ourselves we think so you know, it puts some skin in the game and makes a commitment real. So that's very different than just doing a bunch of Duolingo never ending and just kind of having an unreal project around it does add a certain level of urgency and accountability and gives you a structure and gives you a due date to get things done by when I used to do triathlons, it was the same it was a tremendous forcing function did the same did the same job. They mean, wherever, wherever possible, turn the thing into a project with it, which has to do data as some kind of event which is, I guess what our conferences are for us in our business at the free conferences I mentioned earlier, they cap a year of activity, so to speak. But it comes to a definite sort of a hit as a summit. But it comes to a definite kind of endpoint or a point of accomplishment where something either will happen or won't happen. And that clarifies everything that comes before it.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 43:41

This has been a great conversation. Thank you, gentlemen, we always have to think about how the world works around us. And the media review is a really good time for us to be able to do that. It's just think about the world around us as opposed to being in the moment and living in the world. We can kind of take that view and look at it from a little bit from the outside and help make it just better, you know paving a better path for ourselves, or at least filling in the potholes. While we are at the end of our discussion. The conversation doesn't stop here. If you have a question or comment about what we've discussed during this cast, please visit our episode page on productivity cast dotnet there on the podcast website at the bottom of the page. Feel free to leave a comment or question. We read and respond to comments and questions there. as well. You're invited to join our listeners group inside personal productivity club, a digital community for personal productivity enthusiast that I host where you can interact with V ProductivityCast team directly to join for free visit ProductivityCast dotnet forward slash community and you can get started there. 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 and visiting the about page. I'm Ray Sidney-Smith. And on behalf of all of us here at productivity Cast here's to your productive life

Voiceover Artist 45:02

that's it for this episode of productivity cast the weekly show about all things personal productivity with your hosts Ray Sidney-Smith and Augusto Pinaud with Francis Wade and art Gelwicks