

The Peaceful Productivity Podcast

Ep #91: Prioritization



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[The Peaceful Productivity Podcast®](#), with your host *Kim Christiansen*

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Welcome, everyone. I'm Kim Christiansen and this is the peaceful productivity podcast, where I share strategies to help you get the most out of your time and feel better in the process.

Hi, everyone, welcome to the podcast. I'm excited to share this topic with you today because it is about prioritization. And I think for those of us who are interested in peaceful productivity, prioritization comes up a lot. In fact, I would suggest that probably the number one thought of my clients when they come into coaching is, I don't have enough time. And there's too much to do two sides of the same coin.

What I would like to offer is that these thoughts are actually true. There is not enough time, and there is too much to do. This might surprise you, because I'm all about mindset and thought work. But I also am about perspective. So let's just test that perspective for just a moment. When you think I don't have enough time and there's too much to do. How do you feel? What comes up for you, when you think those thoughts? When I think those thoughts when I really settle into them into the belief into the certainty that yes, I really don't have enough time to accomplish everything that I want to accomplish. I find myself feeling powerless, maybe trapped, hopeless.

Definitely, like I don't really have any options. So the feeling would be stuck. I definitely feel stuck when I think there's not enough time and there's too much to do. And this is where we get tripped up. Because we start to believe that because something is true, then we must actually think it, we must pursue it. But do you know what else is also true? It's also true that there's more than enough time. And then there's not too much to do, even in your present circumstance.

So let's dive into that for just a moment. How is it true that there's more than enough time, the way that I like to look at this is that there's 24 hours in a day, we all have 24 hours, no matter what we do, no matter how we choose to spend that time, we all have the same 24 hours in a day. And something else that is a little bit trippy, I like to think about is that time is actually unlimited. So there's this moment. And then there's this moment. And then the moments are actually analysts until there are no more moments. And then if you're like me, you believe that it doesn't even matter anymore.

So while I'm here, if I choose to believe that the moments are endless, then I sink into the certainty of that thought, which is there's more than enough time. It's not just semantics. And I'll demonstrate why. Because if you can settle into the belief that there's more than enough time, and you really believe it. It's not just a mantra or a positive affirmation if you really sink into the belief that there's more than enough time.

How do you feel? For me, I feel something like sufficiency, or abundance, or even freedom, freedom in the sense that because the moments are endless, then I have freedom to do whatever I want. There's no fear of wasting time. And I think that's the biggest limiting thought is this fear of wasting time. Because if we think about what we do when we're afraid that we're wasting time, what usually ends up happening is, I'll just speak for myself here.

When I'm afraid of wasting time, I feel stressed, I feel worried, I feel anxious. And the actions that come out of those feelings are usually scattered, tactical versus strategic, urgent. I just tackle really, whatever's in front of me what's most urgent, what's most pressing rather than what's most important. And that's all coming from that place of anxiety. Because anxiety at its core is really linked to the idea that we don't have control. And so when I'm afraid of wasting time, I'm afraid that I won't have control that I won't

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have the freedom to choose what I want to do with my time. So given the choice between believing that there's more than enough time, that I have freedom and choice around my time, or the alternative, which is, I don't have enough time, I'm going to choose the former, in that, I choose to believe that I do have enough time. And if this is a relatively new idea to you, you might be thinking, wow Kim, it's easy to say that, but it's yet another thing to completely buy into it to believe it.

And I can totally relate, because before I came upon the idea of thought work, I was right there with you. It's like trying to believe that I'm going to sprout wings and fly, I'm not going to believe that there's more than enough time, if I don't have evidence for that. And that's the secret right there is our brains are programmed to seek evidence for our belief systems. It's called the confirmation bias. So when we believe something, we seek out and see the evidence to support that belief. Confirmation bias can be very, very helpful. Except when it comes to limiting beliefs.

When it comes to limiting beliefs, when we prove those true to ourselves, we get ourselves into a little bit of a self-perpetuating loop, or a cycle, where we're reinforcing the same belief that's actually limiting us over and over and over again. So what I'd like to offer is that we can actually break out of those limiting beliefs. By practicing new beliefs. You're probably acquainted with the idea of neural pathways. And this is something that really helps me is I think about neural pathways as a pathway in the snow. And the first time you go through that big snow bank, you're lifting up your legs really high, to clear the snow and make a new track. Though, the first couple of times, it's a lot of effort.

And then after that, as the snow starts to get packed down, and the path becomes more well-worn, the neural pathway becomes easier, more efficient, and less effort. When you're building new beliefs, you're building a new neural pathway, and like a trail through the snow, in the beginning, it's going to take a lot of effort and a lot of practice. But after a while with practice, that belief can become habit, it can become a habitual thought. This is known as neuroplasticity. And it's a beautiful part of the human condition. Because I'm not stuck in these old limiting beliefs.

Once I recognize them, and recognize how they're not serving me, then I can change these beliefs. And I've had success with this in the past. So rather than asking yourself, Is this thought true? Rather, I like to ask myself, Is this thought serving me? What is it causing me to feel and do in the moment? And are those actions that stem from those feelings in those thoughts? Are they productive actions? And if they're not, then I can step back and take a look at them a little bit closer and decide if I want to continue to practice that old neural pathway or if I want to create a new one. Now speaking of habitual thoughts, and prioritization, I think for most business owners, at least the ones that I've come across and myself included in that group, we often have the thought, it's all important, and it's all urgent.

It all has to happen right now. And there's not really anything I can give up. Especially when you're at the beginning stages of your business. Before you've got processes in place, when you're in that phase of experimentation, where you're looking at what's working and what's not working, that can feel very overwhelming. And I often find myself thinking, there's too much to do. It's all important, and it's all urgent. This is where I've noticed other prioritization tools fall a little bit short. So you might be familiar with the Eisenhower matrix as an example. So the Eisenhower matrix has two axes. I don't know if I said that right, two axes, on the one axis is important, and on the other axis is urgent.

And so you end up with four quadrants. And this is a way that you can categorize the tasks that you have on your to-do list, you can decide, are they important and urgent? Are they important but not urgent?

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Are they not important and urgent? Or are they not important and not urgent? And with the Eisenhower matrix, you can then make a decision about what you want to do with those tasks based on which quadrant they fall into. Now, for business owners, what do you do, if everything falls into the important and urgent category, especially when you're in a very reactive state, when you don't necessarily have a plan for what you're doing? A lot of things fall into that urgent category.

And the more urgent things that you're working on, the more reactive you are, because the less time or at least what you're telling yourself, the less time you have to plan and to be strategic and to step back and get some perspective. So that then becomes a bit of a thought loop as well. So what do you do if you're stuck in this thought loop where everything feels important, and if not important, at least urgent? Well, the place that I always recommend you start is by doing a time audit, doing some time tracking. And I like to look at least a week. The reason why is because we can get trapped into thinking that we are working more hours than we actually are.

There was a study that was done in 2016, by researchers from Stanford University in the University of California. And the study was called Miss remembering our work, a comparison of remembered and actual work hours. So what this study aimed to do was to investigate how accurately individuals remembered the number of hours they worked in a given week. Participants in the study were asked to track their actual work hours, using a smartphone using an app for several weeks.

Then afterwards, they were asked to estimate the number of hours they had worked during that same period. What they found was that participants consistently overestimated their work hours. Researchers concluded that people have a tendency to believe they are working more hours than they actually are due to factors such as stress, perceived busyness, or maybe even the social expectation that when we're busy, we appear dedicated and hard working. So this is the value of a time audit or a time journal is that you can get a greater awareness of the time that you're actually working versus the amount of time you feel like you're working.

I just use an Excel spreadsheet for this but you can use time apps on your phone. The way that I set it up is that I put the time in 30 minute increments down the left side of the sheet, and I put the date across the top. And within each 30 minute time block, I just do a quick note of what I'm working on. It's so fascinating to look back on this. As an example, today, I knew that I was working a lot today because I'm doing a lot of things to get ready for a trip. And I'm actually trying to get some stuff done that I would normally spread over two days. So I knew that I was working a lot today.

But I felt like I was kind of all over the place, I didn't really feel like I was getting the important things done. And when I looked back on it, I actually spent seven and a half hours coaching today, which was amazing. That's my focus. That's how I serve my customers. That's how I create value. So for me, that's the most important activity that I can work on. And I did that for seven and a half hours today, which was amazing. But if you had asked me, I wouldn't have guessed that I had spent that much time coaching today, I felt like I was kind of being pulled in a lot of different directions.

So from a prioritization perspective, two opportunities come out of the time audit. The first one is to give yourself some recognition. I know if I hadn't taken a look at my time journal today, if I had just walked away with the perception that I was being pulled in all of these different directions, feeling scattered, not really accomplishing much, then I would have probably been more likely to feed this narrative that I'm not getting the important stuff done. And with that narrative, when I start to believe that and look for

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evidence that it's true, then I start to feel reactive, scattered, anxious, like we talked about before. And I don't necessarily become proactive in that space, I become reactive. So taking a look at my time journal today, allowed me to recalibrate and actually see the evidence that I did get the important stuff done today, and that I was more productive than I originally had thought.

And when I think to myself, I was productive, that leads me to feeling productive. And when I feel productive, my actions look a lot different than when I'm feeling ineffective, when I'm feeling reactive. So fascinating. Our emotions play such a significant role in what we do with our time. And yet, it's the most overlooked, motivating force in terms of our behavior and what we do. So the time journal gives us an opportunity to actually look back, see what went well, and give ourselves some recognition for what did go well.

The other opportunity that comes out of the time journal, with reference to prioritization is that it gives us the opportunity to look at what went well. And also what didn't go as well. And the avenue to adjust our approach the next day from a more objective viewpoint, rather than from a place of self judgment, or beating up on ourselves. We can look at what actually did go well, I did do seven and a half hours of coaching today. Look at what didn't go well. Well, I could have taken some more breaks.

I think, I also didn't get around to doing some of the financial stuff that I wanted to do today. And so I think the opportunity that I'm recognizing even now as I'm talking to you, is I could have time blocked a little bit more effectively. I did a whole podcast episode on time blocking, it was episode number 85 titled My favorite time management technique. In there, I called it calendaring or scheduling time blocking. When I say those things, I mean the same thing, which is essentially taking your task list and putting it into your calendar and reserving time in your calendar to work on those things that you deem to be important.

So as I review my time journal from today, I recognize that there are some things that I would like to do differently next time. But it's all coming from this place of self appreciation, rather than from a place of self judgment.

So in summary, today, we've talked about a couple of different techniques that you can try. One is around perspective, recognizing limiting beliefs and practicing new beliefs. And if you need any help with that, please don't hesitate to reach out to me, you can find me on my website at financialwellnesscoach.ca.

The other technique that you can try for prioritization is time journaling. So, just tracking your time for a period of about a week just to see where you're spending your time, what's going well, what's not working for you and what you would like to do differently in the future. I hope this is helpful. If it is, I would love it if you were to leave a review and share it with your friends.

Thanks everyone, and have a great week. Are you looking for a coach who will help you increase your business profit while protecting your time and your well being? If so, I'll invite you to check out my website, financialwellnesscoach.ca.