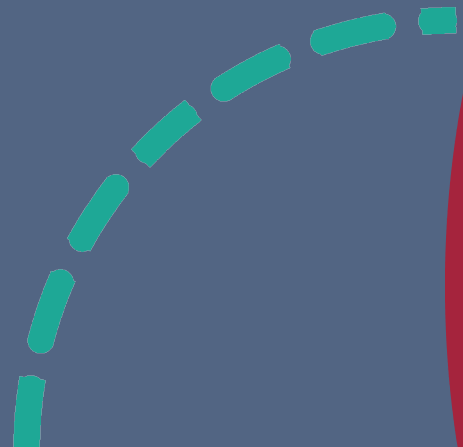




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Long-Term Productivity for Freelancers

Dorothee Racette, CT

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Agenda



1 Introduction

2 Components of productivity

3 Stepping up your game



Productivity Challenges for Freelancers

Top 10 challenges

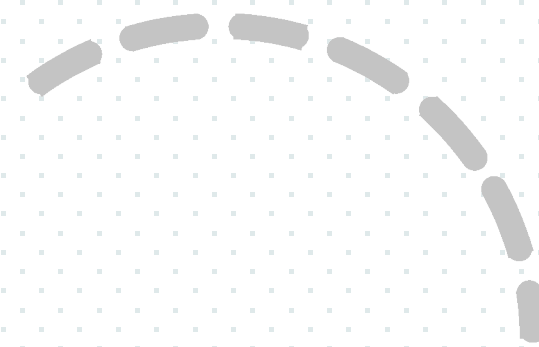


Request your summary after the conference!

dorothee@takebackmyday.com



7-10

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- Perfectionism
 - Effective time management
 - Achieving work/life balance
 - Addressing irregular workflow

Common myths about productivity...



One size fits all...



Productivity is entirely a question of effort...



Short-term changes produce instant results...



Old dogs can't learn new tricks...

The dilemma

Price
pressure

Artificial
Intelligence

Rising
complexity

Limited time
and focus

Pursue clients
Do high-quality work
Manage business





David R. MacIver

@DRMacIver

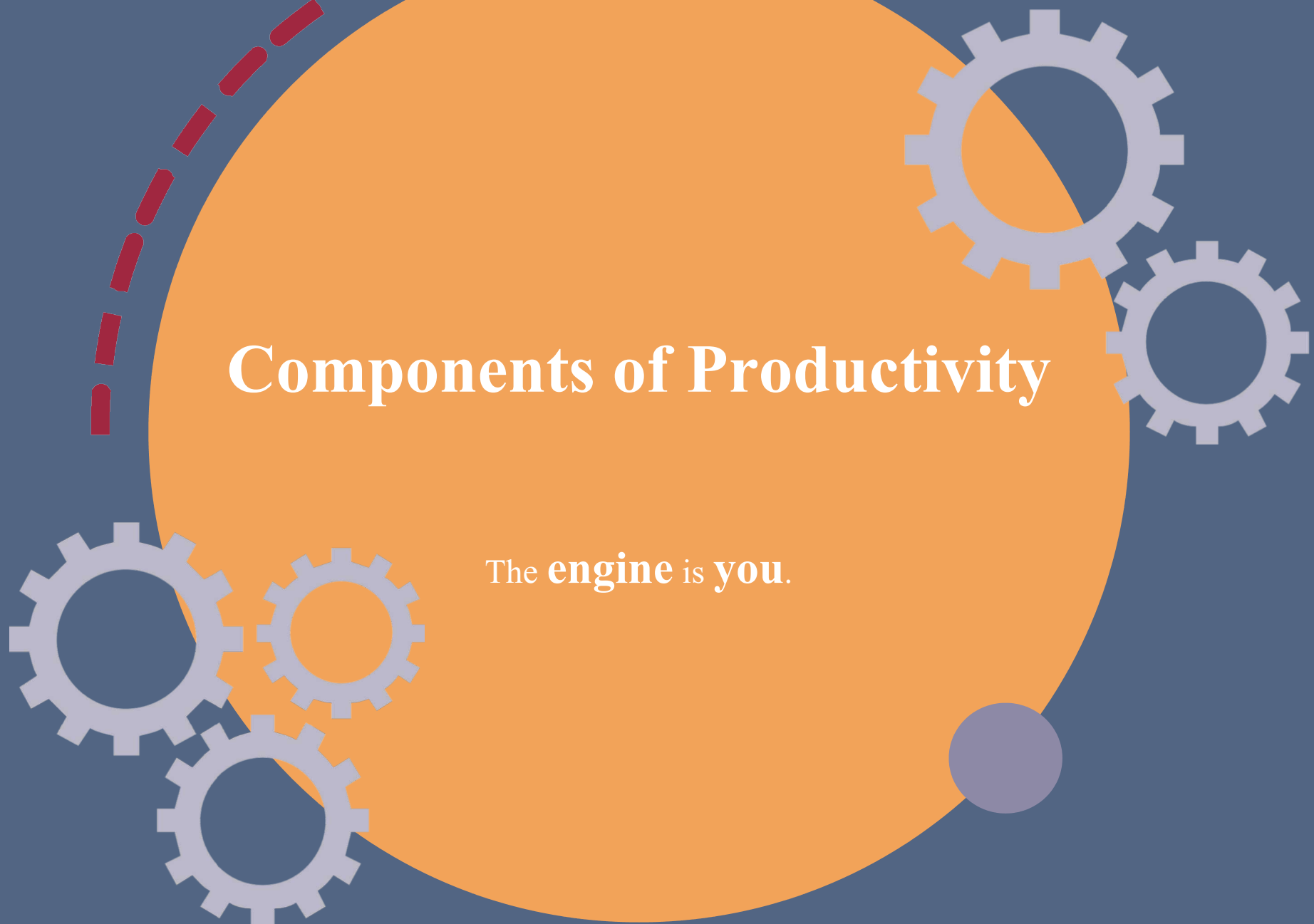


The modern condition is mostly trying to do things on your own that people have historically achieved with a large support network and wondering why you're tired all the time.



Components of Productivity

The **engine** is you.



Individual Circumstances

COMPONENTS

Personal obligations & work environment

- Working hours
- Responsibilities
- Productive conditions
- Equipment

Stress

- Stress factors in your life
- Effects of stress
- How you handle a tight deadline

Time prediction



Time horizon

- Fixed point in the future
- Specific milestones
- Detailed planning



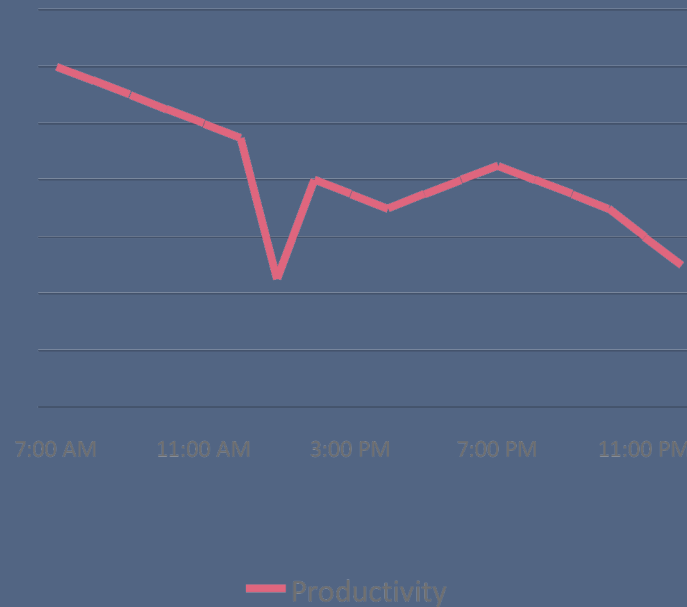
Biochronology components

COMPONENTS

Time Visibility



Peak Productive Time



Work Environment



Ergonomic design



Daylight



Eyewear

Planning ability



Tools



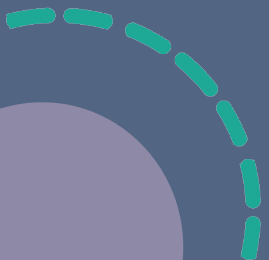
Level of detail



Updates



How you use planning information



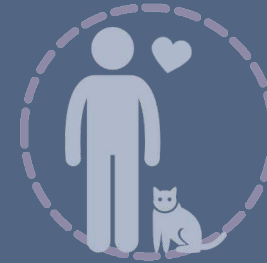
What recharges your batteries?

COMPONENTS

Self-care



Incentives



Level of Priority



Distractions

COMPONENTS

Distractibility

- Attention span
- Completion ability
- Time horizon
- Awareness



Modalities

- Distraction profile (what gets you off track, what feels helpful)
- Underlying reasons for self-chosen distractions

Divided attention

- Ability to function across multiple tabs
- Multitasking



Gets done no matter what

- Deadlines
- Tasks with good match for modalities
- Quick completion



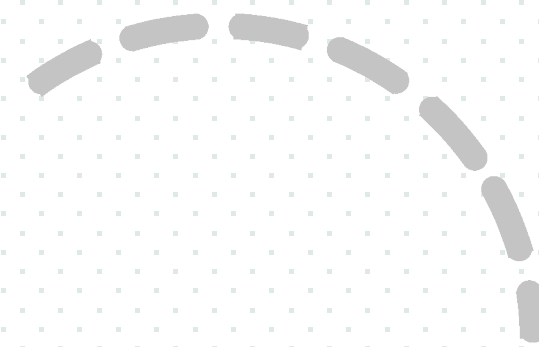
Takes longer than expected

- Invoicing
- Client outreach
- Admin
- Decluttering



Is difficult to complete

- Tasks with poor modality match
- Business development
- Long-term projects



- **Perfectionism**

Perfectionism



Use completed work for motivation



Professional standards vs. personal standards



Define ideas of “good enough”



Limit revision cycles

Stepping up your game

Doing **your** best work.



Time management with chronic challenges

STEPPING UP

1

Plan your schedule
around your
attention span.

2

Small routines are
helpful.

3

Regular breaks pay
for themselves.

4

Don't forget about
transition times.

5

Set up a discipline
of small things.



Expectation

- Back-to-back tasks
- Zero interruptions
- Consistent energy & motivation

Reality

- Recovery & buffer time
- Lots of interruptions
- Energy curve
- Stress

Reentry task: Short reentry assignment

Where do we lose time?

STEPPING UP

Equipment

- Password management
- File structures
- Software capabilities
- Typing skills
- Search strategies

Organization

- Can't find...
- Structured workflow
- Terminology management
- Systematic resource management

Doubt

- Overediting/perfectionism
- Hesitation
- Stories we tell ourselves



2-minute rule: If an action takes two minutes or less, do it right away

Steps to cut out inefficiency

STEPPING UP



Write it

- Handwritten plans help with visualization.
- Keep a running list of ideas and reminders to stay in the flow.
- Take notes on efficiency: “I can do **x** in **y** time”



Reassess

- Check and update your daily plan in regular intervals.
- Verify time predictions.
- Wrap up the day with a task review.



Skill up

- Learn more about your tools.
- Set up your equipment and data structure for maximum efficiency.
- Dictation, email scheduling, email filters etc.



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- **Effective Time Management**

Effective Time Management



What's possible within the given time



Spending time means making choices



Time assessment to reflect capacity



Overdoing = exhaustion

Process summary

- Know your personal time style
- Know your attention span
- Use time as your most precious resource

Hofstadter's Law:

It always takes longer than you expect, even when you take into account Hofstadter's Law

Knowing your own speed

- Helps with scheduling
- Pricing
- Highlights room for improvement
- Builds confidence



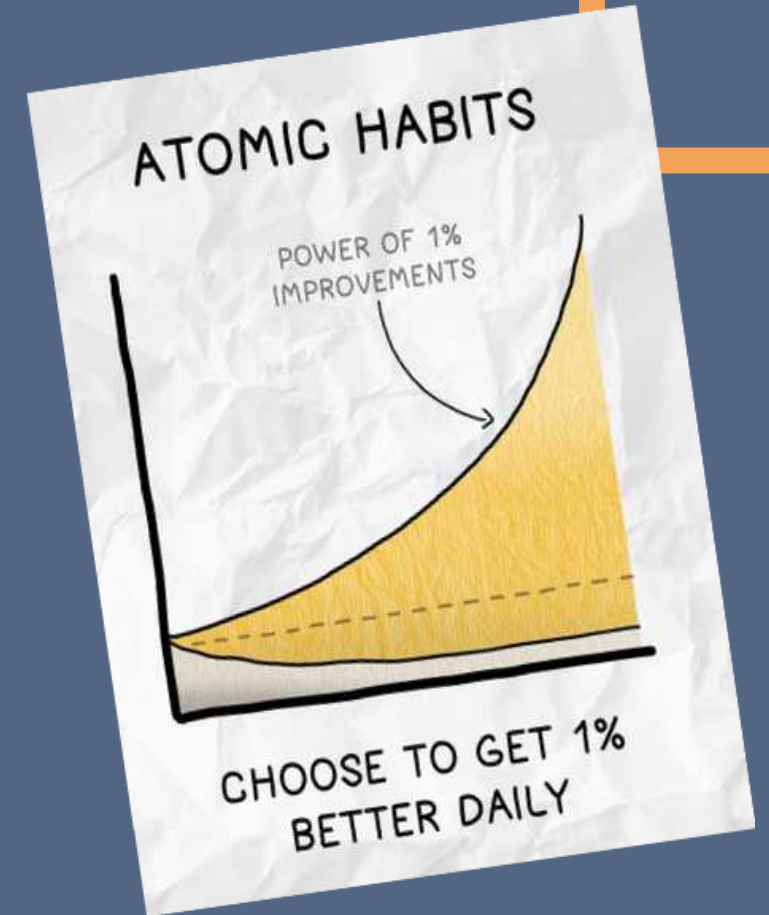
Habits Work!

Ideas for Habits

- Drink water with daily planning
- Take a break at a specific time and stretch
- Check in with yourself at a specific time
- Do 10 minutes of study every afternoon

Habit Building

- 30 seconds or less
- Repeat often
- In the same place



Anything driven by desperation:

- All-nighters/crazy hours
- Working seven days a week to keep up with work
- Cutting corners



Avoiding Burnout

- **Physical symptoms:**
 - Fatigue
 - Sleep disturbances
 - Muscle tension
- **Mental symptoms:**
 - Exhaustion
 - Depression
 - Anger
 - Cynicism
- **Relationship conflicts**
- **Absence of joy**



Productivity = Getting breaks



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- **Achieving work/life balance**

Achieving work/life balance



Balance changes over time



Create “end-of-work” rules



Productivity declines without recovery

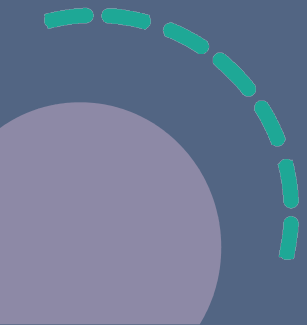


Rest is not a reward

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Wrap-up rituals

- 10-minute wind-down: close apps, silence phone
- Prioritize 3 tasks for the next day
- “Fake commute” for transition time
- Ambient changes (lighting, music)



Keeping work confined

- Brain cues to stop working
- Transitions
- Permission

- No-work zones:

“My work is not allowed to ...”

“Uptime” versus “downtime”

- Outreach
- Organization
- Planning
- Learning





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- 
- **Addressing irregular workflow**

Addressing irregular workflow



Not all times need equal productivity



Slow day list



Uneven workflow is not a personal shortcoming



Preparation for peak times

Process summary

- Know your personal time style
- Know your attention span
- Use time as your most precious resource

How to Get There

STEPPING UP



Map It

- Envision your work and obligations going forward
- Visualize your resources
- Decide on boundaries



Balance It

- Find the balance you need to do hard work
- Focus on aspects you enjoy
- Ask for help



Frame It

- Define learning goals
- Decide priorities
- Let go of comparisons



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Questions?