Objectives

• You’ll know how to apply theories, tools and techniques that can improve your productivity.
• You’ll make a commitment to taking some next steps.
Basic Premise

• You are the instrument of your work
• Anything that develops your:
  – Health
  – Resilience
  – Concentration
  – Mental and emotional well being
  Will also improve your productivity.
• Half the game is what’s between your ears

Agenda

• From Overwhelm to Focus
• Energy and Attention Boosters
• Action Planning
Agenda

• **From Overwhelm to Focus**
  • Energy and Attention Boosters
  • Action Planning

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**From Overwhelm to Focus**
Characteristics of Overwhelm and Focus
Productivity Boosters

Symptoms of Overwhelm and Focus

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<thead>
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<th>Symptoms of Overwhelm</th>
<th>Symptoms of Focus</th>
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Get It Out of Your Head

• Anything you consider unfinished in any way must be captured in a trusted system outside your mind.
• Sample systems:
  – Wunderlist
  – Active Inbox
  – Google Tasks
  – Notebooks
Productivity Boosters

Get It Out of Your Head List

List as many incomplete tasks, activities, and projects as you can think of in the allotted time.
From Overwhelm to Focus

• Get it out of your head
• Process
• Prioritize
• Focus

GTD Processing System
Part 1 of 2

Is it Actionable?

Yes

Get clear and specific about the action

Will it take <2 minutes?

Yes

Do it

No

Archive

No
GTD Processing System
Part 2 of 2: Action Needed, >2 min

Are you the best person to do it?

Yes

Does it need to be done today?

No

Delegate it

Yes

Add it to your list to prioritize.

Schedule it
"stuff"

In-basket

What is it?

Is it actionable?

no

yes

Trash

Someday/maybe
(tickler file; hold for review)

Reference
(retrievable when required)

Projects
(planning)

Multistep projects

Project plans
(review for actions)

What's the next action?

Will it take less than 2 minutes?

yes

no

Do it

Delegate it

Defer it

Waiting
(for someone else to do)

Calendar
(to do at a specific time)

Next actions
(to do as soon as I can)

WORKFLOW DIAGRAM—PROCESSING
From Overwhelm to Focus

• Get it out of your head
• Process
• Prioritize
• Focus

Attention is a Limited Resource
Attention as a Limited Resource

• If you respected attention as a limited resource, what would you do differently?
Productivity Boosters

What would you do differently if you respected attention as a limited resource?
Activities

Figure 1: Urgent/Important Matrix

- High Importance
  - "Important Goals"
  - "Critical Activities"

- Low Importance
  - "Distractions"
  - "Interruptions"

High Urgency
Low Urgency
Productivity Boosters

Urgency and Importance Matrix

“What is important is seldom urgent and what is urgent is seldom important.”

– Dwight D. Eisenhower

Think about your typical work activities, and write them down in the appropriate box on the matrix.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important and Urgent</th>
<th>Important, Not Urgent</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not Important, Urgent</th>
<th>Not Important, Not Urgent</th>
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</table>
Prioritizing Grid

From Overwhelm to Focus

- Get it out of your head
- Process
- Prioritize
- Focus
Focus

• Lower the stakes
• Give your brain instructions
• Time-limited work periods
• Centering Exercise

Lower the Stakes

• Loss aversion impairs performance
• Reduce the fear of loss/failure by preparing for it.
**Worry Worksheet**

1. What is the worst that could happen? Keep asking “what would happen then” until nothing worse can happen.

2. What would I do if the worst really happened? What would be my plan? How would I take care of myself? How would I make the best of things?

3. What can I do now that would lessen the probability that the worst will happen?

4. What can I do now that would increase my chances of success?
Giving the Brain Clear Instructions

• The brain evolved to deal with concrete situations.
• For your highest priority activity, what specifically do you need to do next?
• Camera check.

Time-Limited Work Periods

• Notice what happens when I say:
  – “Go to your office and don’t come out until you finish your report.”
  – “Go to your office, turn on your computer, open a web browser, and spend 30 minutes starting the research for your report. Then get outside and go for a walk around the block.”
Productive Self Talk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counterproductive</th>
<th>Productive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have to.</td>
<td>I choose to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I must finish.</td>
<td>When can I start?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This project is so big and important.</td>
<td>I can take one small step.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I must be perfect.</td>
<td>I can be perfectly human.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t have time for fun.</td>
<td>I must enjoy myself.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In Sum:** I have to finish something big and do it perfectly by working hard for long periods of time without ever having fun.

**In Sum:** I choose to start on one small step, knowing I have plenty of time for play.

Focused Work

- What comes to mind when you hear the phrase “Focused Work”?
- What specific actions can you take to create greater focus?
What are the characteristics of focused work? What specific actions promote focus?
Increasing Focus in 12 Breaths

- 3 breaths: letting go of the past
- 3 breaths: letting go of the future
- 3 breaths: coming into the present moment
- 3 breaths: arriving at the right level of energy, creativity, concentration, etc.
ACROSS
1) Microbrewer's need
5) Etcher's material
9) Practical jokes
14) Keystone State port
15) "Singin' in the Rain" first name
16) First letter, in Hebrew
17) Super server
18) Classic Icelandic poetry
19) Eyelashes
20) Brief description
23) Piece of property
24) Biddy
25) Contemptibly small, like a tip
29) Four-footed friend
30) Eliminate
33) Tries to persuade
34) British slammer
36) Olympic champ Kulik
37) Determine based on evidence
40) Deteriorates
41) Blockhead
42) Spherical map
43) "What ___ the odds?"
44) Love handles, essentially
45) Mountain ridges
46) Luau food
47) Indian dress
49) White, gray or black
57) "Go ahead and ask"
58) Unwakable state
59) Barn topper
60) Kind of pasta
61) Roulette bet
62) Aussie birds
63) Nasty look
64) Withered
65) Bird's abode

DOWN
1) Headcheese, e.g.
2) Foot part
3) In ___ of
4) School session
5) NASA, for one
6) ___ Rapids, Iowa
7) Non-studio film, briefly
8) Finalized agreement
9) Blazer, e.g.
10) Ewok or Klingon
11) Assault with snowballs
12) "Spartacus," e.g.
13) Persian potentate
21) Very light wood
22) Beach souvenir
25) Hindu ritual movement
26) Overthrow, e.g.
27) 5 1/2- point type
28) Emulates a seamstress
29) Kind of mark
30) Ness of "The Untouchables"
31) Greek weeper
32) Claire of Hollywood
34) Joint problem
35) Cape ___ Mass.
36) Maroon's home
38) Adjuster's investigation
39) Hungarian language group
44) Page-bottom info
45) Known by few
46) Lying facedown
47) Cook's need
48) Drawer of a bead
49) Some snakes
50) "Big Brother" host Julie
51) Give an edge to
52) "Bullets," to a poker player
53) See 47-Down
54) Poor, as excuses go
55) Albatross, figuratively
56) Symbol on a staff
Agenda

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Energy and Attention Boosters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td>Greater energy, increase sense of agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>Increased energy, better mood, lower stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meditation</td>
<td>Increased concentration, lower stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naps</td>
<td>Increases productivity and alertness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>Boosts creativity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breaks (brief diversions)</td>
<td>Increases task focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of nature</td>
<td>Reduces fatigue, decreases stress</td>
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Agenda

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From Preparation to Action
Focus on What You Want

Instead of trying to suppress an unwanted behavior, focus on new, desired behaviors

WOOP It Up

Wish, Outcome, Obstacle, Plan

• Wish – What you hope will come from this session.
• Outcome – the best outcome you can imagine for your meetings
• Obstacle – what might get in the way?
• Plan – make a plan to make it happen
Make a Specific Commitment

• What?
• Where?
• When?
• Research is mixed on sharing the goal publicly or with significant others ... your mileage may vary
## WOOP Action Planning Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Wish</strong> – Your reason for coming to today’s session</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Outcome</strong> – the best outcome you can imagine</th>
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<th><strong>Obstacle</strong> – what might get in the way?</th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Plan</strong> – make a plan to make it happen – include What, Where, and When for your next step.</th>
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• Program evaluation link will be sent by email.
• You’ll get a link to a course page with all the materials.