A Personal Journey

In the Beginning

For many years I have been searching for a personal organizational system that really worked for me. In 1995 I thought I had found the answer with First Things First. (I spent 100's of hours fine-tuning and extending processes that came from suggestions made by Steven Covey and the Merrill's.) This became my planning tool for more than ten years.

In 2008 I went back to school (while I continued to work). In my second year I discovered Microsoft OneNote. (If you work with Outlook, you own and have access to OneNote.) Within a year, I was completely convinced that there was no package as important as OneNote for those who are taking classes. By 2010 OneNote had wormed its way into all aspects of my life: studying and research, planning sessions, goal setting …. At this point I continued using my paper based tool.

The Problem

Like most people, I have roles I am uniquely responsible for (business owner, course creator, trainer, artist, parent, husband …). And like many people, I have weekly obligations and on-going project work. One of my biggest challenges has always been to create systems that allow me to quickly get down to meaningful and productive work. I needed tools that allowed me to conduct research and then have quick access to that research – notebooks, spreadsheets and word documents weren't doing the job. I needed something that would allow me to incorporate long term LIFE planning, into weekly tasks and appointments. I needed a leadership tool that allowed me to relax and just work hard - instead of wondering if I was working on what was really important. I needed a tool that would allow me to plan well and quickly and to work a lot. I needed a whole system that wasn't scattered all over the place, and I needed to spend less time looking for things.

Take a Course, Find a Solution

 In 2012 I enrolled in an on-line design class (a MOOC's entitled Design: Creation of Artifacts in Society). The project I set for myself was designing a life management system. Decomposition by user needs / function gave me many additional requirements: a system that was portable, that was visual, and that didn't require specialized tools, a system that incorporated everything from mission statements to scheduling specific recurring tasks …. It wasn't until I was investigating existing systems that I began to think about using tools I had already been using: Outlook and OneNote. And it wasn't until I got deeply into the functionality of both of these pieces of software that I could craft a solution that solved the problems I had been experiencing. I have been using and refining this process now since early 2013.

After reading the following I decided to turn this process into a course:

> A survey of North American companies had 53% of employees saying their stress could be reduced by recognizing their various roles in life (29%) or by training them to cope with workloads (24%). Only 23% wanted more money (13%) or vacation time (10%).

Teach It

It is with humility and gratitude that I present our newest course: **Your Time Your Life!** Pretty much for sure, people are going to find at least an extra half an hour a day for working on important projects (worth approximately $1,875 – $3,750/year.)

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