

**David Allen** 00:06

What's the first thing you notice what's not where it needs to be the way it needs to be? you capture or clarify what's has your attention about that situation? So you start to notice what's off or not on cruise control. Step two, step three. Where do I put those things organized? Once I decide to what these things have my attention mean, and they're not where they need to be? Where do I put them? So they are where they need to be you look at the time, look at the context. Okay, what's next. And then you engaged Step five, you only need to write down what you wouldn't remember, if you hadn't had some sort of reminder. So a lot of to do lists create as much stress as they will leave. Because they just remind you of things you still haven't decided about. What you're going to do about this stuff works the best in chaos.

**Blake** 01:14

And now you have to watch our podcast.

**Jacob Morgan** 01:16

So Hello, and welcome, everyone to a special episode of The be your own boss podcast. Our guest today, David Allen, somebody who I'm sure many, many people are familiar with. He is the best selling author of getting things done. The getting things done method, and his book is called the art of stress free productivity. David, thank you very much for joining us. Hey, guys.

**David Allen** 01:36

Happy to be here. Thanks for the invitation.

**Jacob Morgan** 01:39

Oh, of course, of course. So why don't you jump? You can ask the first question.

**Blake** 01:43

Yeah. So So joining us all the way from the Netherlands, David Amsterdam. Yeah, from Amsterdam, all those beautiful tulips. I actually used to work at a company called the International quality and productivity center. So clearly, there's this obsession with productivity. I'm curious to know what inspired you to write an entire book about productivity?

**David Allen** 02:05

Because productivity sucks? No, no, I'll, I'll try to be a little more oblique or honest about that. productivity has a lot of baggage around it as a board. It just means working harder, working better, whatever it is, yeah. Being everybody is actually as productive as they need to be right now. Because that's what you got. You guys produce this, you produce this conversation, you produced what you're wearing, you produce what you ate for dinner, or eating for dinner. You know, you're producing all the time. When people say productivity, they say, How can I be more productive? Which means given the energy I'm putting into stuff, can I get more out of it? Or given what I'm producing out, I can do with less energy showing leave work sooner, or leave less stuff and do more cool things I want to do. So when you see productivity, that has a lot of strange things about it. It's really about what are you trying to what do you want to experience? What do you guys want to experience? When you get out this with

me? You want to be more relaxed? Do you want to digest your food, you want to make sure you have quality time with your kids? Do you want to, you know, you want to make sure you're moving forward on by hiring the right hiring the vice president or getting good kids in the right school? Or, you know, making sure you get the right insurance policy for whatever you yada yada? Yeah. So a lot of what I uncovered was how do I get clear about all that? So I could just be free and present. And, and, and not distracted by anything that the rest of my life? Well, that's not free. So I just uncovered the policies or the structures or the frameworks you need to do to make sure that happens.

**Jacob Morgan** 04:06

And for people who are not familiar with the framework, I'm going to read how it's defined online. And you can you can correct if anything needs updating. But the Getting Things Done method rests on the idea of moving items of interest relevant information, issues, tasks and projects out of the mind, by recording them externally, and then breaking them into actionable work items. And this allows attention to be focused on taking action on tasks instead of recalling them. Would you say that's a pretty fair summary and description of what the approach to getting things done is?

**David Allen** 04:39

Perfect.

**Jacob Morgan** 04:40

That's simple, right?

**David Allen** 04:43

That's simple. But just go do that. Yeah.

**Jacob Morgan** 04:48

Yep, exactly. Have you found that is this something that entrepreneurs struggle with more than people who have traditional full time jobs?

**David Allen** 04:57

Well, anybody who is Jumping into a new world that they don't understand totally appropriately yet, don't know how to get control of and feel stable about yet that that's who this is for. And entrepreneurs are a ripe audience for that, obviously. Yeah, as an entrepreneur or a potential entrepreneur, wow, I want to unhook from my global financial company that I've been an executive with. But I'd really like to start my own startup with my idea that I thought that's could be really cool. Yeah, anybody in that kind of context is going to have a lot of hats they need to wear, they needed to wear a hat for the banker, the the wear a hat for the potential partner, they need to wear a hat for quality of life with my family, not this change. So, absolutely throw somebody into that kind of situation. You know, an entrepreneur, unless they have all the resources, they can hire 4300 people that didn't handle all the aspects they've already defined, they need to be handled. That even those people and by the way, I've coached several of those. They're out of control themselves about how do I manage all of that, Oh, my God, I've created so much. So the idea of an entrepreneur meaning there's something I want to do, that could create value, that I could then produce that value and express it and share with the world and maybe make money out of sharing with the world.

**Jacob Morgan** 06:29

For for Blake and I, both of us, sometimes we struggle with the stress free productivity, because so much stuff stays in your head that find that we're talking like remember

**David Allen** 06:42

what how how old you need to be to find out your heads a crappy office? Yeah. That's what what are you guys gonna learn that? I need cats. I need cat food. I need to figure out should we adopt? I need to hire a vice president? What are you going to get that off your mind for doesn't wake you up at three o'clock in the morning?

**Jacob Morgan** 07:02

We try to use a sauna. Yeah,

**David Allen** 07:05

yeah, that doesn't work. That will relax a little bit. And let you sort of relax and not face so much attention to what's going on in those other worlds. But you can't stop the noise of those other worlds, until you engage with the appropriate processes, capture, clarify, organize and reflect on what those things are that you committed to. So you can't get out of this by drinking or meditating. Or soldering. I love saunas. Yeah, I love them. They're great.

**Blake** 07:42

So So David, why meditate? I admit, I don't drink. But yeah, meditation usually works, but sometimes it doesn't. So you're the ultimate productivity expert. And I imagine that you're like living your own art. So I know that our audience would love to hear what your day is like, do you wake up and do a mind dump on it with a?

**David Allen** 08:04

No, no need to? I've already done that that's been done. I do it as soon as

**Blake** 08:09

they tell us about your perfectly stress free productive day. What does that look like? What are your hacks that you use? Personally,

**David Allen** 08:17

most of the night before I look at all the hard landscape, I've committed to one of the things I've committed to other people, I would be with them at some time tomorrow. So I know how long they've been asleep. Yeah. Now at age 75, that's one of my critical factors go How long can I love Sleep, sleep is great. I'm doing all kinds of things in the sleep, you know, there's not happening otherwise. So so that lets me know when I need to wake up. Now we have a new puppy. So waking up is going to happen no matter what. So you know why she she needs to go out and do her puppy thing. And then I have a little little bit of a personal ritual with my wife. You know, we drink lemon juice in the water. So we clean our system. And we have a wonderful hard French press coffee, we share. I get on my easy couch or easy chair and open my iPad, who read the New York Times and the Dutch news, local news. And do a

couple of games of word with friends to you sort of trigger my brain to start thinking and then I relax and have no other plans other than what I had committed to today. And everything else is that total intuitive judgment about all the other options I might do today. But those have already already been decided they've already been catalog catalog. They've already been tracked in my external system. Now, that's what I do. And then I do as I plan as little as I have to. So I can be free to make intuitive choices about what I do. But I'm my brain is freed up to not have to remember what I need to do. It's all out here.

**Jacob Morgan 10:06**

So I thought maybe we could walk through the the five steps because people who are listening or watching might not be familiar with them. And the steps are capture, clarify, organize, review and engage. So can you give us maybe one or two sentences about each one of them just so that people can visualize like how they actually might do this? Right? And one? Sure.

**David Allen 10:28**

Well, first of all, anybody who has a kitchen or cooking area I didn't. I didn't make up what you need to do to get that under control to do what you want to do in your cooking. I recognized it. The first thing you need to do is recognize what's off, you come into kitchen. Oh, my God, the kitchen turned it out of control. Or I forgot I hadn't been cleaned up last night. But I got guests coming over or I need to I want to cook a nice dinner for my family tonight. You walk in and go, Oh my God. What's the first thing you notice? What's not where it needs to be the way it needs to be? you capture or clarify what's has your attention about that situation? Right. Then what do you do? Well, then, wait a minute, is that a clean dish than a dervish? That's a spice. That's a, that's a, that's good food, and whatever. So you start to notice what's off or not on cruise control. Step two, which is clarify. So first step is capture, identify what's off or what's got your attention. Step two. Hmm, what is that? What's the nature of that thing that's off? What's the nature of it? Step three. Where do I put those things? That's dirty dish, dishwasher. Oh, that's spice goes where spices go? Oh, that's good. That goes back in the fridge. So step three, organize. Once I decided what these things have my attention mean? And they're not where they need to be. Where do I pick them? So they are where they need to be Step three, that's organized. Step four is review or reflect. Let me look across Okay, everything okay? Okay, I need to I've got friends coming over our, I've got a family I need to cook dinner for whenever you look at the time, look at the context. Okay? What's next? And then you engaged Step five, so that so then you go, Okay, let me go pull up butter and melt it because I needed to put x ray. So you did the process of capture, clarify, organize, reflect, and engage. Every time you get any situation. More clarified. And under control, you go through these steps. That's how you get your kitchen under control. It's how you get caught me. It's how you get your consciousness under control. And most people, most people don't do those. They do a little bit of those. But they don't do them. Like you would do if you if you were a French chef. Yeah, so if I want to be they have a phrase called me some plus, before you even ring the bell for for dinner tonight in the restaurant, everything had better be in a place everything, what do we need, everything has been in place, because it's gonna get crazy. When it gets crazy. You can't have all that other stuff out of control.

**Jacob Morgan 13:31**

So if I were to walk through it now, so the process of capture, okay, so capture the way that you capture, I think you say you basically just write everything down. So everything that's in your mind that

has your attention. So in my case, you know, I have a phone call at 10 o'clock, I'm doing a chess lesson, I gotta walk the dogs. You got to think about dinner, pick up the kids. So I would write all of this stuff down.

**David Allen** 13:52

That would only well come on the dog, you know, pawing at you. You don't have to write that down. They're going to tell you. So you only need to write down what you wouldn't remember. If you hadn't had some sort of reminder.

**Jacob Morgan** 14:07

Okay, so like I need

**David Allen** 14:09

that's not that's not already in the system. Okay, usually, you don't need to write down when you need to pee. that'll tell you, you don't need to write down when you need to do dinner that'll come down will tell you so there's a lot there are tons of things we need to do that sort of are expired just started life experience and, and our systems and our processes automatically make happen. So those things don't need to be written down. Only the things Oh my God, I forgot that. Okay, well, why? That's the stuff that needs to be written down. Okay, we have a we have a new puppy, by the way. So we're writing down every time she pees and poops because we can't we can't remember that and, you know, she's on a cycle. We need to manage that. So, so you know, for house or apartment breaking if we will create an apartment, so, so you just have to decide what do I need to keep track of, and how to be reminded of that. But anything else, a lot of stuffs not automatic. You don't need to write that down.

**Jacob Morgan** 15:19

And then after you write it down, so you put everything down into Asana on a piece of paper, what's the clarify? How does that actually come to life?

**David Allen** 15:29

Well, what depends on what you wrote down, if what you wrote down is not the next thing you need to do about it, then you need to clarify what you did to do about what you wrote down.

15:39

Okay,

**David Allen** 15:40

if either of you have a to do list, pull it out. And very probably what you have on that to do list or not the specific things you need to do about any of those things you wrote down, you have not yet clarified what you need to do about mom's birthday, or the bank account, you know, change or the, you know, our handle, you know, or should we adopt? Or how do we handle mom's elder care? Now, you may have written those down. That'd be rare if you'd written those down. But even so he hasn't decided what's next.

**Jacob Morgan** 16:19

Yeah, so it has to be an action.

**David Allen** 16:23

It has to be, is there an action required? And if so, what is it? Okay. It could be something there's no action required. Oh, that's just information. That was Sarah's birthday that I just wrote down or somebody to let me know. Let me just park that somewhere. And then I'll see that where I track birthdays. Or it may be Ooh, we need to do something about Sarah's birthday. In which case, I say okay, what's the next step? I haven't decided that yet. That's right. So a lot of to do lists create as much stress as they relieve. Because they give remind you things, you still haven't decided about what you're going to do about them. That's the clarify step.

**Blake** 17:04

So David, I'm very curious to ask you, if you've had any surprising reactions to your your book. It's been out for a few years. Now I know you revised it. But from working parents, particularly entrepreneurial parents, we have two little kids life is super chaotic with COVID. A lot of the resources that you would go to prior they're just close. So basically, working parents are just doing double shifts all the time. So I'm curious to know if you've had young parents that are working embrace the book or any advice you have for them to how to live a little less chaotic life stress, more stress free, when really the only constant is just chaos with little kids help us David Well,

**David Allen** 17:47

yeah, this stuff works the best in chaos. So a lot of people who've integrated this methodology already are going up, thank God, I had this already in my, my my toolkit, so that I could deal with the change as fast as it happened, and then sit down and quickly integrate new stuff, integrate new new focus, integrate new projects and outcomes I want to have achieved and get on top of those. You can even get a get rid of that. You know, that's going to happen 100 years from now we'd fly to Jupiter. There's no difference in the what you need to do to get on top of your world is go What is your world? Your world is, is very different than your neighbours world. Trust me. It's not about oh, by the way, the world is fine, look outside. It's not overwhelmed. It's not confused. It's not out of control. It's doing exactly what it does. It's only your relationship to that world. That's the issue. So you have to get clear about what your relationship to that world is. So what are you guys committed to, we're all the things you might want to do should do might need to do need to handle need to finish need to take care of, etc. And you know that that's just what this process is. So I didn't make this up. I just recognize what you need to do if you want to get clear about your commitments and step on top of them instead of the very bottom.

**Blake** 19:18

So it's your relationship to whatever's going on. It's not necessarily what is going on is how do you feel about it? Is that what I'm hearing?

**David Allen** 19:25

It's not just how you feel about it. Forget your feelings. Like, well, what I'm talking about is going to affect how you feel about it. Right? If you feel that's terrible, and I go, Well, wait, what do you want to have true? I guess we need to get clear about XYZ. Great, you've now got an outcome. What's your

next step? What do you need to do to get clear about that? Oh, I need to talk to my life partner, or I need to search the web about XYZ. So even though you don't like it, and it's pushing on you now, you're in the driver's seat about it instead of being the victim of it, that's what I teach.

**Blake 20:06**

Yeah, reminds me of just next best action, which life can feel so overwhelming. But what you do it almost you kind of remind me of a monk To be honest, where you're just like simplifying, and you're removing chaos. And you're creating, you're simplifying and making things very clear.

**David Allen 20:25**

Yeah, but this is not about rice bowl and cave. I love good Chardonnay. I love having a complex life, I love doing all kinds of things. I just don't want them to be distracting me from whatever I'm doing. So I'm a freedom guy. What do I need to do to get that clear. So I'm not distracted by my other commitments that I can't handle in the moment that allows me to be president, whether whatever I'm doing, that's my driver. And that's what drove me to create this methodology and present it, you want to be clear and present, which is your most productive and healthiest state to be in, whether you're cooking spaghetti, tucking your kids into bed, watching him play soccer, without being on your iPhone, or writing a business plan or having a difficult conversation to fire somebody, I don't care where that is. And what those situations are, the clearer you are, your head is not distracted by all the other ambient anxiety that's created by all these other commitments, you haven't managed appropriately. That's the state to be in.

**Jacob Morgan 21:26**

I was just going to ask you about ambient anxiety because I saw something you mentioned in a couple of your talks and podcasts in the book. Can you explain what ambient anxiety is? Because I think it's something that a lot of people know,

**David Allen 21:39**

it's pretty simple. You have a cat, you need cat food, you haven't managed that appropriately, it wakes you up at three o'clock, oh my god, we need capital. And 6000, or 600, probably are probably 150, other things like that. And you say I would could should need to handle that I haven't done exactly what I did do I need to be remote, I don't know what to do. You know, it's the stress of essentially, infinite opportunity. If you wherever you guys are sitting right now, if that caught into fire, you're building wherever you are, is starting with, oh my god, that lights alarms going off or whatever. You're not going to worry about tires on your car. You're not even going to worry about cat food. Gonna be highly focused on what you need to do to get to where you want to be, which is live and not burn up. The problem is, when that kind of crisis is done, then you have all the demons at the gate that come rushing through, oh, my God, you could do this. You could do this, or what about this? And you could do this? Yeah. But is that the best thing to do? Oh, my God. So you, it's more of the opportunity you have, the more stress you'll create. And that's the ambient anxiety, how many things could i would i should be might ought to be doing right now. Instead of talking to me?

**Jacob Morgan 23:12**

Nothing just talking to you, David.

**David Allen** 23:14

So what that is, by the way, let me caution you there. If that's true, then you're cool. You don't need to do anything else. It's about being present. But when you stop talking to me. Are you that clear. But what you do next? And that that's the thing. Yeah. How many other things could you be doing once you stop talking to me? Right. And there's the issue? How well do you manage that sort of context of opportunities and possibilities and things to do, and stuff I haven't yet decided about, but I need to handle that and to handle that. And still, it's the it's the commitments, it's the overwhelming commitments people have made, that they're not aware of that they've made, that they're not completing, and not managing appropriately. That's creating the ambient anxiety. That's this subtle sense of stress that you can't find the source. Now.

**Blake** 24:18

So speaking of that subtle sense of stress that you can find the source. A big challenge for people, especially women is likability at work. And I used to work at a fortune 100 company as an executive, I really struggled with this. Because the rules are not always clear. Like you need people at work to like you. But it's not clear how that's done. Now, we live in an age of social media where it's like me, like me, like me, and it's a lot of noise. So what advice do you have for people that no, that likeability is important for their survival, but it also creates a lot of noise and it's not really productive. Yeah, real simple.

**David Allen** 24:57

Grow up.

**Blake** 24:59

Okay.

**Jacob Morgan** 25:01

I like that

**David Allen** 25:02

we'll learn that we'll learn. You'll learn. Go follow your likes, until they don't work. Yes. Right. It's a good idea, though, if you want to make get a little clearer about what you want to do, say, well, where would you like to be three years from now? What would you like to be doing in terms of lifestyle and career job? Okay, so what are you doing about that? Is what you're doing moving you toward that away from that? Are you just avoiding that? I don't care. But I'm suggesting that if you want to get really clear, and really present, you know, the mindfulness, people are teaching that get present, you know, folks, you're breathing in good stuff. But it's hard to get present. If you haven't got those kinds of agreements clear with yourself, or acknowledge that, by the way, you don't have to. You don't have to set goals. You don't have to be, you don't have to have any of those answers, go go brains around, walk around in life, and see what it teaches you.

**Blake** 26:07

But was there a moment that you realize that as a young man, or is that something inherently, you



**David Allen 26:13**

know, just took a lot of years of my own self exploration and self development stuff that I did with myself about who I was? And what was honest about me? And what was true about me? And how do I then manage this? And how do I manage this in life, and what I would do to stay clear and stay present with myself and get free in my head, about stuff. And so I started to learn different pieces of this methodology, just for myself, to be able to second stay free in a very complex life, and not be bothered, you know, by things that shouldn't take up more attention than they then they should. And so I just discovered piece by piece, this stuff back in the early 1980s, took me about three, four or five years, to start to really go, you know, bring together several things I've learned. And by that time, I'd had my own consulting practice and using those techniques with my clients, and they work, they produce the same results, very positive, powerful results. And so then that became, I got, somebody recognized me from the big corporate world and said, Wow, we need that whole company, can you design something around this as a training of whatever about what you've come up with? And I said, Okay, I'll, I'll do that. And it was highly successful. And then in 1983 84, I went up thrust into the corporate training world with this thing I'd uncovered, mostly for myself personally, had pretty much tested it with people around me about how they could handle their world much better and much clearer. So they can get back to this sort of free space inside, which I love. So that's, that's still my driver at age 75. I'm still going and what's what's in the way of clear space. And I still deal with it. Same with the same techniques that I uncovered, you know, 4540 years ago, 30 years, 35 years ago.

**Jacob Morgan 28:04**

It seems like also a big part of the Getting Things Done process is your ability to say no. So whether you have a full time job, and you're saying no to your managers, whether you're saying maybe no to members of your team, but you're trying to kind of create some of that space, right, so that you can focus on the things that you need to get done. So do you have any advice or suggestions for how people can do a better job of saying no, especially if it's to a manager or a friend or family member?

**David Allen 28:32**

Yeah, good question. First of all, everything you guys are saying no to how many things right now that you're talking to me instead of what? Do you know what those are? Yeah. Can you show me right now a list? Each one of the things you guys are not doing right now that you think you should be at some point? If you can't do that, you're going to have a hard time telling me No. Because you're not sure what all the other stuff is that you're saying? me know about? So understanding all the commands you have makes it a lot easier to then make that no decision for yourself personally. If you have a boss, or you have a unit situation, you said, Yeah, hey, gee, boss, these are waco projects you just gave me? Can I show you what I've currently got on my plate? And can we talk? Because I can't do all of these. I need to let something go to be able to do these. Well, help me out. Some version of that conversation is critical, but you won't have that conversation. Even as as comfortable as you think your culture is to have a boss that would have that, that you could have that conversation with unless you have your full project list.

**Jacob Morgan 29:51**

Somebody on my team did that to me. So somebody on my team, I tend to throw a lot of things at her all the time and she He finally had a lot of stuff on our plate. And she came back to me and she said, you know, Jacob, you sent a lot of projects my way, which ones you want me to prioritize? And that got me to really think like, Okay, well, which ones do I really need to get done right away versus which ones can wait. And so, you know, instead of just saying no to me, she forced me to create a priority list for her what she should focus on first. And then second. And third, I thought that was a very, very clear, she probably got that from your book. I should ask her about that.

**David Allen** 30:28

I don't know. But But she was your trainer.

**Jacob Morgan** 30:31

Yep, you helped a lot.

**Blake** 30:34

What you're saying is basically to look as much as what you're saying no to is what you're actually doing. And I think what I've seen, at least especially with women, is they struggle to say no. And rather than say, No, they'll just take on everything. So to me saying no, does require self esteem, actually, it's saying I'm worth it, I deserve the time and space to give things to give the gift of my attention, my focus, but that requires self esteem, rather than just kind of being bullied and just say, yes, not

**David Allen** 31:07

just not just self esteem, but self awareness of what your commitments already are. Ultimately, we say yes to something, you're going to ultimately say no to it, if you've been overwhelmed, and you can't deliver. So ultimately, it becomes how mature Can you be about the commitment you make, and your intelligence about, you know, what your bandwidth is? And then they want to say, God, that's a cool thing. Let me look at all this stuff I have to do. By the way, if you can take a maybe on that, till I get back to you. That's what I'll give you. If you have to have an answer now. Gotta be no. You know, or check with me again in a month. Those are conscious, professional conversations. And anybody who's just, that's a grow up. That's what growing up a lot is, is being much more conscious about what those things are, and the price of commitments made but not kept.

**Jacob Morgan** 32:06

There was a, an article, I don't know if you saw this or not. But there was an article that came out last year in the New Yorker called the rise and fall of getting things done. Not sure if you start and I'm sure there have been a lot of people who have critiqued your approach over the years. Because you do need a very structured process centric approach to get everything done. And some people have been arguing that in today's world, it doesn't make sense anymore. You can't be so process centric and rigid. What do you say to a lot of the people who say, you know what, this may be worked 20 years ago, but technology in this connected world that we're all a part of, we just can't think in such a structured flowchart kind of way.

**David Allen** 32:44

Fine. Have fun.

**Jacob Morgan** 32:48

Simple, it's simple enough.

**David Allen** 32:50

I'm not a preacher. I'm not trying to convince anybody. I'm just saying, if you want a clear head, totally, these are the things I've come up with. There's no simpler way to get there. And if you got a better way to do it, let me know. I'll teach it and then I'll write the next book. Haven't heard anybody do that? Yeah.

**Blake** 33:09

Yeah, there's something about saying something out loud or writing it down, that it seems to set it in stone in a way. And like, it's different than just thinking it so is that really the beauty of what you're prescribing that, write it down? Say it out loud?

**David Allen** 33:27

thinking thinking it? There's thinking, Oh, that's a cool thing to think about. We might need cat food. I don't care if the cat dies or not. Okay, fine. And oh, gee, if I don't get cat food, they're going to clump me in my face. So there's two ways to think about something is to think about a call that's it's fun to think about, might be something that mature my thought process about. So I do that all the time. Like, we all have 50,000 thoughts a day, you haven't written any of them down? I've written to doubt, probably. So it's not about writing everything down. It's not about it's just a matter of sorry, what do you mean? Is that something I might need, would could should need to decide or do something about and if you keep that in your head, your heads a crappy office, really the I can give you five books that have been written in the last 10 years than the cognitive scientists who've discovered and recognize your brains a crappy office did not evolve to remember, remind, prioritize and manage relationships between more than four things. Look at all the look at all the apps, you using bank accounts or whatever, how do they How do they sort the numbers, usually into three or four format? Quite that's your brain that's your brain can handle that short term. So there's something about your brain's ability to manage that stuff. I I'm not a preacher. You can just you can do whatever you want. But I guarantee you, if you're sitting down to do mindfulness stuff and focus on your But you still need cat food is gonna pop in your head. Right? Unless you read it on a post it on the fridge that whoever is going to go to the store next will pop food then it's off your mind. So sorry, guys, here's a big deal if you guys are keeping a calendar, why?

35:20

Why? You want to answer

**Blake** 35:23

or? Yeah, Warren? Well,

**David Allen** 35:28

I'm gonna let you grill her No, no, no, let your mind do it. No, no. Why keep a calorie?

**Blake** 35:34

My mind is you say are the mind is a crappy office I think my mind is like an office has been blown over and a hurricane like if I just think about like, for me, my calendar is so critical. We have so much

**David Allen** 35:49

why have a calendar? Why don't you do it in your head?

**Blake** 35:53

Like I said, Remember the hurricane image? It's like, Well,

**David Allen** 35:57

why don't keep all the rest of it out of your head, like your couch?

**Blake** 36:02

Yeah, you've taken it a step further, it kind of reminds me of Marie Kondo, the professional organizer, where, you know, she's anti hoarding, and it kind of for me is like a visual of what you're talking about that everything should have the place it should be put away, just to decrease chaos.

**David Allen** 36:20

Well, just to give your brain a, you know, cognitive real estate, so you could do strategic, intuitive creative thinking, as opposed to remembering, reminding and trying to figure out all this stuff. Yeah, extra extra brain is much better for that, though, like a gazillion times better than that. as well. You have the calendar. That's why I asked you. Why do you have a calendar? Your head can't do it?

36:43

Yeah. pop in your

**David Allen** 36:47

head can't do it. It can't remember all the errands you need to run all the stuff, you need to talk to your life partner about all this stuff that you need to that you might want to surf the web app. It can try it, but it'll remind you those three in the morning when you're not when your computer's not on. So your your, your hand actually doesn't have your brain doesn't have one. It's kind of a stupid computer. If your brain had a brain, it would only remind you of things when you could do something about them.

**Jacob Morgan** 37:20

Yeah, I mean,

**David Allen** 37:23

I was gonna say, if you have something that leads batteries, right? When does your brain remind you you need batteries? When you have that thing that needs them? How about if your brain just said, I don't need to remind myself there. I need when I walked into a store that has those batteries. That's what I'll be reminded of that I need them. That's efficient. That then frees up the cognitive real estate that's been taken up by Oh my God, I need batteries. Oh my god, I need batteries. Oh my god, I need batteries. And most people have no concept of how much subliminal cognitive real estate is being taken up by all of those inappropriately engaged commitments they've got in their life and work. Yeah, that's

all. That's all. That's all I figured out how to get back to clear space. I look your space. I'm a clear space guy.

**Jacob Morgan** 38:15

Yeah, and I think a sign of this is probably when these random things just pop into your mind. Right? So I mean, that happens to me all the time during the day. If I'm doing a Tesla scenario, I'm trying to go to sleep at night. And I remember Oh, you know, I should review this document. I when I wake up tomorrow, I gotta send this email. And that's probably a classic example of what happens when you don't do this. Yeah. Well, one question before we jump into some fun rapid fire questions for you. And that's for for people who are listening and watching this. Right after they're done. What are some steps that they should do right away besides buying your book, of course, to start to be more productive and to focus on getting things done. If you were to give people just a couple couple action items for what to do.

**David Allen** 39:01

pen and paper. Anything pops into your mind, I need to get divorce. Should we hire should we adopt? I need to hire Vice President, I need cat food. Right? Get it out of your head. All of those. Step one is captured. Step two is look at each one of those things. Decide what what exactly what I need to do about figuring out whether we should adopt or not or my cat food, what's the next thing that would be required? Once you make that decision, say, if I can't finish that, in this moment, we're going to park some reminder that may or the appropriate person will see that so that I don't have to be remembering reminding that needs to happen. It's already in the system, some sort of external list manager if you will, personally, then make sure that you review those things on a regular basis. If nothing else, write stuff down, deciding some next actions. And then at least once a week look back on your life and say what are all the things I need to do so you know, capture and some version of, of, you know, decision making about action required, and some level of review about all that context and all that stuff. Those are the PA if you did nothing else that's going to improve anybody's life.

**Jacob Morgan** 40:16

Sounds good.

**David Allen** 40:17

And by the way, most people are not doing those. Yeah, so it's not that hard. Not some foreign language or new technology need to learn. Just learn how to recognize what has your attention. It's not right or not appropriate or not on cruise control and identify that, and then identify what you're going to do about it, and then have some sort of system that reminds you what you need to do.

**Blake** 40:50

Great. Yeah, um, we have a few more minutes, we've gotten up quite a bit of comments for you. And it seems like people are not it's not as much questions as just like loving the focus on what you're saying. But let's listen

**Jacob Morgan** 41:04

from Dan Wilson. And we got one from Brian Kelly. Yeah, we have a few questions. I'll read this one from Diane Wilson, because I think it's pretty good. She says, What if it's not even knowing where to start, lots of things to do need to do and some days are just overwhelming. Yet during the stay at home time, there's a growing pressure to be productive, aka. So what did you do? Learn accomplish, etc? So it seems like her question is

**Blake 41:33**

that she doesn't even know where to start is overwhelmed.

**Jacob Morgan 41:36**

What if it's not where to start,

**David Allen 41:38**

you sit down, take an hour and unload everything off your mind, you might could chew and we ought to be doing. Just make a list. everybody listening to this or watching this is at some point confused and overwhelmed medalist, if not better. That's your first start. Just get it out of your head, just get a little more objective sense of all those options. See, any one thing can make your wife feel overwhelming. If you haven't got it objectified and gotten in control of it. Now any one thing could be and it'll make your whole life feel overwhelming. So make the list. Everybody's made a list and felt more in control and more comfortable and the world didn't change what you did what you changed how you engage with the world. So the first step in engaging with the world is identifying what's got your attention. There are a lot of things you don't need to write down again, like your your blood pumping, and your breathing and your refrigerator works. And you're you know, there are a lot of there are a lot of things that you don't need to write down all of the reported. It's the things you that have your attention, oh my god, I need cat food, refrigerators broken, or whatever. And that's the stuff you need to get out of your head, get it out in front of you, and just see what it is. Otherwise, it's spinning around subliminally in there, that's the source of the ambient anxiety is all that internal spinning about all the potential things you might Could you be doing but you but you can't see what they all are. So you think it could be anything. And there's psychologically that's a that's a great way to feel stressed.

**Jacob Morgan 43:08**

I was gonna say, sounds stressful.

**Blake 43:11**

And, and, and thinking about what you're saying today, I'd like everybody to just even imagine if they implemented what David's talking about, like imagine what you could create without all that weight and mess in your mind. Like maybe you'll create something incredible without all the the hindrances

**Jacob Morgan 43:31**

and anxiety like that.

**Blake 43:35**

So we're we've reached the end of our time together, but we do have a couple fun questions for you. I'll let Jacob asked the first one. Just whatever comes to mind. And let's start with the island. All right.

**Jacob Morgan** 43:48

So if you were stuck on an island and could only have one food or drink, what would it be?

**David Allen** 43:55

pina coladas.

**Jacob Morgan** 43:58

That's the food and the drink. That's it.

**David Allen** 44:02

That's all I need.

**Jacob Morgan** 44:02

There's calories in there. You can survive on that.

**Blake** 44:05

What's your most embarrassing moment at work?

**David Allen** 44:14

Question I can remember being really embarrassed at work about anything. Tell No. most embarrassing at work. My most admire work is being on stage. You know, and doing a lot of other stuff and other kinds of things. Probably almost embarrassing would be if I maybe had too much to drink in sort of slurred whatever saying in a way that probably was the best like say probably at that level. All right.

**Jacob Morgan** 44:54

what's what's your greatest joy.

**David Allen** 45:04

being present and feeling at one with whatever's going on in the universe, and that it's all fine.

**Blake** 45:12

If you could have lunch with one person dead or alive, who would it be?

**David Allen** 45:26

Abraham Lincoln Bradley.

**Jacob Morgan** 45:28

And last few questions for you. Who's the greatest band of all time?

**David Allen** 45:33

The greatest band of all time? Yeah. Good question. I just tell him No. Hard to not say the Beatles because I grew up, you know, I'm, I'm, I'm I grew up in that generation. Yeah, I said the Beatles. Right.

**Blake** 45:57

And lastly, if you had \$1 billion, what would you do with it first?

**David Allen** 46:05

Fabulous bottle of 1945 Margo wine, which is my birth year. That apparently was an incredible year for wine in the Margaux wine. And, Bobby, the first thing I do

**Jacob Morgan** 46:20

was probably buy a case actually, you don't need to just get one bottle.

**David Allen** 46:25

No, no, I wouldn't depend the rest of that. on that, but that'd be the first thing I'd buy weed if I had that kind of resource. Absolutely.

**Jacob Morgan** 46:36

Well, David, where can people go to learn more about you, your book, anything that you want to mention, I know there's tons of resources on your site out there. So anything for people to check.

**David Allen** 46:46

Now just getting things done calm, just go there. And you'll surf around, you'll see a lot of things, if you're interested, depends on where you are in the world, we have that we have certified trainers, and consultants, doing virtual stuff. Now, given the pandemic, that are that is deeper work inside of this methodology all over the world. So if you go to our site, and then click on training, coaching, you'll see just type in your country. And you'll see people we've certified that do that work there. And so create some local connections that do much deeper work with this stuff. That's wonderful. If you want to get into it, it's great stuff to do. So that's, that's a great path. And that we have a free newsletter that you can sign up for there, whatever, just surf the site, see whatever interests you rings your bell. That's a great way to play. Cool. Well, David,

**Jacob Morgan** 47:35

thank you so much for taking time out of your day to speak with us. We really, really appreciate it. Yeah, we learned.

**David Allen** 47:41

Yeah, my pleasure, guys. Thanks for the invitation,

**Jacob Morgan** 47:44

of course, and thanks, everyone, for tuning in. Again, my guest, our guest has been David Allen, best selling author of getting things done the stress free productivity, the art of stress free productivity. So check out his book, check out his resources, and we will see all of you next week. Thanks for watching.

**Blake** 48:03

Thanks for watching our show. For more content just like this. Don't forget to subscribe.



**Jacob Morgan** 48:09

And we also just released a brand new PDF on how to become an entrepreneur while you have a full time job. So if you want to learn how we transition from being full time employees to entrepreneurs go to [cheating on your job calm that's cheating on your job.com](https://cheatingonyourjob.com)