

Ep 24 raw with Manlio Lo Giudice on Flow

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SPEAKERS

Manlio Guidice, Francis Wade



Francis Wade 00:41

It's the Task Management and Time Blocking Podcast, episode 24. So you're a creative person. And getting into the flow state is the key to your success. Like Michelangelo or Leonardo, you use focus high energy times to do your best work. And even when you're in that state, but you also have a TikTok account. And guess what the people that you're following on TikTok, they are a growing distraction. You just can't help yourself. You just your hand just drifts over to the TikTok account. And next thing, you know, you're taking a peek, and then another peek. And when someone forcibly takes away your smartphone, you know, like your spouse or friend says, No, you need to do your work and hide your smartphone from you. Finally, you're able to focus, but then you all focus, and that you work for 15 hours straight, and then you collapse and exhausted, you did the work. At that point, you look at your computer or your laptop, and you hate the idea of even coming anywhere close to it to do anything further, because you're just overworked. So getting and staying in the flow state and exiting it is not so easy after all, to this episode, to hear from me and my special guests, Manlio Lo Guidice, as we solve this challenging problem together.



Francis Wade 03:09

As you can see, I'm joined on stage by our special guest Manlio Lo Guidice And before I introduce him properly, I'm enjoying the conversation, let me that we use for this program just in case you're a listener, you know, you're listening to the podcast, but you're watching the video. And you've never joined us before. Because the thing is, we do things a little bit differently. So this is a problem solving episode, where we're going to look at a particular problem, the one I introduced at the beginning of the show...it's all about the flow state. And the first part of the show is all about diagnosing the problem. The reason that we're doing that is not just for the fun of it, we're looking for new kinds of solutions that we can introduce in the second part.



Francis Wade 03:58

So let's start with a story. Michael is an artist. He's actually a painter. And he's working on a big corporate account. He has one plan, and the person is very demanding. But now he's building a surprise following on TikTok. He went from 100 to 100,000 followers in just a month. And now he can't get his mind away from it. Before TikTok he used to work level as an eight. But as he's gotten older, so a while ago, he used to work 12 hours a day and now he's gotten older. He can't do all nighters away, he could get himself out of trouble at the last minute doesn't have the stamina that he used to have. With no one. In his immediate circle to help he thinks he's in trouble. But he doesn't know where to start a little bit of background. Michael had a drug problem many years ago. And actually this feels a little kind of similar. There's a certain loss of control that he's experiencing all over again. On top of that, Michael, you know, he used to work construction to make ends meet while he was a more of a struggling artist. He used to have a physically demanding job, but he's now a couch potato.



Francis Wade 09:14

And here to discuss the case of Michael. And the problem of getting into the flow state and being effective while you're there is Manlio Lo Guidice. And Manlio is from... you tell us where you're from Manlio, people will figure it out from your accent, but he's a pragmatic engineer over the self experimentation. He's also an entrepreneur, blogger, personal trainer, productivity and human potential development coach. He's also a newbie TV show writer, and amateur actor, singer and musician. He's the creator of the Think Fit App. Think that up. malleable, welcome to the show. Thanks,



Manlio Guidice 09:55

Francis for having me here. Very excited. I'm from Italy. I origins are from Sicily.



Francis Wade 10:03

Aha. Hence our use of Leonardo and Michelangelo, these are your, your, your bona fide peeps. Right? If you're currently living in Switzerland,



Manlio Guidice 10:19

In Luxembourg, Luxembourg, which is a little bit lost in between Europe, somewhere





Francis Wade 10:26


it's come we're kind of in mid summer. So let's talk about Michael's problem. So he used to be able to get into the flow state. And then he's a victim of Tik Tok, which is a fantastic app in terms of its result that people will use it and have a hard time getting out of it. And abuse you know, I'm a tick tock user, are you are you also afflicted by TikTok or have you stayed away?




Manlio Guidice 10:58


 Manlio Guidice 10:55
I stayed away for the time being

 Francis Wade 11:01
You're a very smart fellow, because I can tell you and many can tell you that, that thing is that crack in terms of addictive properties, it figures out exactly what gets your attention, and then feeds you a steady diet of all kinds of everything that just keeps you glued to it. This is worse than anything I've ever used before, it is so strong.

 M Manlio Guidice 11:25
And it's engineered... is engineered for that specific purpose.

 Francis Wade 11:29
It's specifically designed to get that done. Yeah. And you know, here here we here we are, we call on with order flow, state ideas and or flow state ideas were first birthed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi with his book on the the idea, but he captured on paper, the idea that we get our best work done when we're not interrupted. And we are able to match the challenge of the task very closely with our capabilities or skills. So there's a nice balance between the two, so that it's not too easy. And it's also not too hard...the thing that we're trying to do. So it captivates all our attention. And when we're in those moments, we're experiencing periods of euphoria, where we feel fulfilled, we have a sense of purpose, because this is where we're here on the earth is to do our very best work. And in the flow state, we are able to do our very best work and it calls it forth from us. So that's an old idea that's 1990...late 1990s been around forever, but the state of the art is still kind of that book. And along comes TikTok. And we want to get our best work done. And the world is engineering itself. So prevent us from getting it, though. That's an accurate statement of the problem.

 M Manlio Guidice 12:49
Yes, correct. And one point that is specific to this point to this conversation is that during inflow state Times, Time is flowing naturally, you don't realize that time is flowing, that this is one point that we will manage during this conversation.

 Francis Wade 13:09
Right, so and if you don't, it's all one of the other things I didn't mention about the flow state, which is one of the great bits about it, is that when you're in it, time flies. Yeah, correct. But if the whole idea is that you stop paying attention to the clock, because you're giving 100% of your attention to whatever it is that you're working on. So time just kind of flies by and that's the whole idea, the whole idea is that you're so deeply into it, you're so immersed in it, that you don't want to be interrupted. And you don't want to stop to look at the clock, you just want to keep going. And as you keep going, it gets better and better. And it's it's just an awesome

space to be in. We're not taught that. So we're kind of self taught. So we you know, we started teaching ourselves these things if, depending on when you heard about the concept of the first time, but it came around in the early 90s. I pretty much as I said, we haven't really done a lot of engineering we don't.

 **Manlio Guidice** 14:07

Yes. I continue for some time because reaching flow is a goal is an achievement is as you mentioned, is a self fulfilling, is endorphins, dopamine is a lot of chemicals inside so of course you want to stay in that moment but then you are either interrupted or like a few days ago it happened to me I was interrupted by a shoulder pain actually because of my position and my posture. So it was so

 **Francis Wade** 14:07

So, in the case of of Michael, I mentioned that he started off not being able to get into the flow state and then he got into the flow state and then he went too long so he kept going and going and going. And have you ever had this experience where you keep going and going and going and you go too long?

 **Francis Wade** 15:06

I know exactly.

 **Manlio Guidice** 15:09

I was in the flow state in the same position not moving. So much just typing. And then this happened. So I realized what what I am now so, so that this was one interruption, but healthy, healthy one. So

 **Francis Wade** 15:25

I know exactly what you mean. But it's not healthy, right? Because ultimately, if you have to stop because your back is hurting, obviously, you should have gotten up to walk around. So that can mess up, I should have stopped to get up and walk around. And really when I, when we go into the flow state, we would love to have an imaginary guide, who just taps us on the shoulder and tells us what to do. Okay, now's the time, take away your phone, let me take your phone away. Nobody's interacting...with interruptions from social media, and I will stop you after an hour. So you can get something to eat, something to drink. And you can change your position, you can go for a walk outside for five minutes. And that'll help you to keep going.

 **Francis Wade** 16:07

So you want an imaginary and imaginary manager to make sure that we don't make a mess of

this thing. Because left to ourselves, we're very likely to want to be in the flow state, but then experience, you know, kind of, for me anyway, it's a kind of a frustration, when I'm not able to do my best work, it feels as if something is missing. And I look at the quality of what I'm doing. And if it's broken up by by distractions and interruptions, I can look at it at the end and say this wasn't very good. And I gave five minutes here and 10 minutes there. And the research says it takes 20 minutes to get into the flow state do your best work. So if you don't get there, you can expect not to do your best work. But again, you know, we're not taught these things. So we're, whether we know it or not, we're always fighting the interruptions. We're fighting the tendency to go to long, we're actually in effect, because the flow state doesn't come easily and without conscious effort. We've got to put an investment into it. So if there's a villain and all this, it's it's kind of our inability to manage ourselves in your state effectively. Is that accurate?



Manlio Guidice 17:27

Yes, perfect. Correct.



Manlio Guidice 17:28

And because also is a cultural matter. So we are in by the society, we need to work, work work. So having a break, voluntary break, as you mentioned, having someone tapping and said, okay, just take a rest, breathe, come walk outside, just some physical movements, some breathing session mindfulness, eventually, we see a lot of people look at this, like, Okay, I'm losing my time here. So yeah, it's a matter of energy management... people, they need to switch to do some energy management, because when we have energy, we then we are able to produce more flow, more focus, and during the day,



Francis Wade 18:11

right, so it's managing posture as well. As you said, it's managing your food intake, it's managing water or liquid, because you can't stay in the flow state. You know, and people do it, people suffer the people who are working for 48 hours straight, particularly creatives, who give themselves over to the flow state. And then two days later, they realize they haven't had a bite to eat. And then they collapse.



Francis Wade 18:40

But that's not ultimately sustainable. And it's not just with a little bit of the magic that we're hoping to explore in this episode, they will be able to have days of flow state as opposed to the one major sacrificial commitment that then extract so much from them that they're unable to continue. So there's got to be a way right? There ought to be a way to not just get into the flow state the one time, but to manage ourselves in the flow state on a continuous basis. And also, to look into the future and say, We need to be able to engineer our flow state.



Francis Wade 19:23

So that when a new app comes around or your situation changes. You know for example you

So that when a new app comes around, or your situation changes. You know, for example, you might have kids, let's say all of a sudden, you know, you're all of a sudden, but let's say you get news that you're gonna have twins and the twins, it's great to have twins. And then they keep you up at night and then they're crying and then they're playing around and then but for how many years? If you're someone who works from home getting thrown into the flow state requires very deliberate engineering. You cannot just... it won't come to you the way it did when you were single. It needs to be come a strategy needs to be implemented, right? So there ought to be a way to be strategic about doing your best work, so that you can produce the results you want. Even if the technology comes into play, even if your family situation changes, whether you're working from home or working from the office, there ought to be a way... it's kind of like... It's kind of up to us because the world isn't giving it to us. The world is kind of designed to NOT give it to us.



Francis Wade 20:32

So today, will I you know, if we could, if we could frame this as a kind of epic struggle of trying to do great work, but at the same time, you got to live trying to do your best work, but at the same time, you got to pay the bills, creating amazing works of art. But at the same time, you got to eat and drink. But what does that so do so far, that's not a well, description of the problem?



Manlio Guidice 21:03

At the same time, you have your life to live, you have passion, you have hobbies, you have family, friends, dogs, cats, whatever.



Francis Wade 21:13

And they all need to be fed, and they all need to go ahead and they all need to stay alive, right?



Manlio Guidice 21:20

One is asking for for attention, and is asking for also, our our bodies asking for attention when we want food to eat or drink. And a time. Yeah.



Francis Wade 21:34

Right. Right. So if we weren't, if we weren't able to begin to solve the problem today, what would happen in the future? You know, if we, if we couldn't achieve the flow state in an effective way, you know, what's, what's that like, in someone's life?



Manlio Guidice 21:53

Okay, well, as you know, the difference between what's shallow work with deep work

eventually. So, again, not not being able to reach a flow state, like...training is new means that we are always in shallow waters, we are just not able to produce what is called deep work. But ever something superficial, like, this is still work. But this may be not the important one we would like to achieve to reach our main goals aligned with our purpose, because deep work is the one we want the one we reached, when we do flow states, we are most probably working on something that is driven by our passion. So I think this is a struggle.



Francis Wade 22:50

I agree. And ultimately, it's really frustrating. Because a poor output leaves us feeling ineffective, when we don't really solve problems properly, then they reoccur. You know, if you want to put together a great information product or you want to design a great app, for example, if you never do the necessary important, you know, high quality work that thought it was at the heart of the thing, then you could expect to be you know, turning you're turning your wheels in the future because you never really get to something that's compelling. And something that has a case of an app, something that has market value, something that really solves a user's needs, it stays superficial, it has these these kind of awful qualities and things that we don't want. And I think when people realize they're in a rut like that, often what they try to do is to work harder or longer. Exactly. And why doesn't that work?



Manlio Guidice 24:00

It's because as I mentioned earlier is better energy management, we are drained every time that we try to refocus and we time we have inner frustration because if in shallow work, the amount of errors we are willing to make is increasing because we let's imagine we are focusing on one task that could be anything then we are interrupted we go back to the same task and then we are interrupted to go back to the same task again. So, we need our brain need to recap where we are at this moment what what is the next step. So, we are not going into again the deep work and we are not able to be creative inventive as as as not be interrupted. So I think this is what exactly we have not able to reach to solve some key problems that that is also in history. Initially, we had a lot of big problems solved during the during flow state or deep, deep work. So with shallow work, unfortunately, we have a maybe at the end of the day, we have a lot of things done but things that were busy just yet yeah, just low level shallow work, things not bringing them the real milestone not reaching the milestone we want we would like to achieve. And at this is frustrating, at the end of the day, maybe we have done a lot of stuff, but we're not really meaningful to us. And, and this is increasing frustration. So this is the risk being drained, a lot of energy trying to do this interruption and work shallow work. And then this feeling at the end of the day of NOT accomplishment.



Francis Wade 25:54

Alright, I just was you know, we're, we're not quite machines, you know, we have real relationships we have, we have things we have to get done for ourselves. And for all the people who are around us. We can't quite just program ourselves. But but for the most part, we're operating without any information about interruptions.



Francis Wade 26:21

So it's not, it's not like we're getting into the flow state. And there's a report that says you spent 15 minutes in the flow state out of the last hour. We don't have any data, we just kind of bounce around from one activity to the next. Without really knowing how much time and how well we're managing the flow state.



Francis Wade 26:42

So this is kind of crazy, right? This, this is the most important time we should be able to measure it. And we should when it doesn't work or when it gets interrupted we should be able to measure that too. But I don't know and this is probably why we were still back in 1995 or whenever the book came out. So we're we were not even able to engineer the basics about the flow state. TikTok however, it's watching everything we do down to the microsecond right there they are like keenly, and they know exactly what to do. So we don't know what to do in terms of managing or so we don't have any data about the best work that we do. But this app has all this information about how to interrupt us so there's no maybe it's obvious why we're not winning this particular battle is because we have no information what do you think of that idea?



Manlio Guidice 27:42

Yeah, yeah, exactly does remind me that when a lot of the most productive people they are doing "in the morning do not look at your phone or your email" because all your email because you are external inputs, managing your time. Instead, you should manage your time and should be able to decide what to do next. How to plan your day and this is basically is basically the same here... and so going back to your last question, but it can be



Francis Wade 28:15

We should get a report each day. I am excited to spend two hours in the flow state you only got 10 minutes and the reason you got 10 minutes was because you had five interruptions yeah, I've never seen anything like that. Or thought. This requires a bell moment.




Manlio Guidice 28:33

Now, there was there is there are different tools again this does require effort which is required because nothing comes for total free and super sums but it's very minor effort this could be done also with a piece of paper with interruption log this is some some this can be done so any anywhere, anytime someone gets interrupted just log the feeling out feel what what was the interruption and then you need time to review because you need to digest and review d of the week, then there are different approaches to that. Only after that you are able to understand the main trends among the interruption types times of the day. So that there are some common trends cum analysis. Each one is anyway personnel to an n =equal one. So you have your own specific and also another good point is that the environment of course is a huge influencer in that so the environment if you if you do this work the same environment same every day, you will have a trends and some results. But as soon as you change your

environment, you mentioned the twins, the twins is also a change in your environment, external environment. But you also if you if you, you work from your office, tomorrow you move in to a library or coffee shop, you will have different type of interruptions and because the environment is change. So we need to track those trends in a more very efficient and effective way. So the easiest piece of paper is just starting no cost at all. But again, this does require some reflection, personal reflection.

 M Manlio Guidice 28:46


So it seems crazy to me, right? Because we're, here we are with our piece of paper. And we're tracking. You know, we're here writing stuff down tracking, whether we're in the flow state or not, and what the interruptions are, right? Basic technology, nothing has changed since 1995. Because somebody thought of that, when Csikszentmihalyi came out with this book.

 Francis Wade 31:05

TikTok, however is getting better and better already, at figuring out how to get us from the flow state from whatever it is we're doing. So it's gathering data, and it's improving. And here we are scratching our own with bits of paper, the thing that's most important to us, which is doing great work. Here's the technology we're using, and we haven't made any tangible progress. Since the book Flow came out. We're still at starting zero, we have I don't have an app that measures the flow state. I don't have an app that measures interruptions. My devices aren't talking to each other. So if they did, they would be able to say "Oh, you took a TikTok...you shouldn't have!"

 M Manlio Guidice 31:52

Yeah. Okay. Is that the interaction? Maybe the interaction will come there are some Neurofeedback apps. But I tried many many Neurofeedback apps with connected with some things in connected to you Scalabrini. Yes, measuring brainwaves? Yes, yes, I have done a series of experiment. But again, it does. I cannot stay in the office, for instance, with these things in my head. Looks a little bit weird. Yeah, yeah. So I try. And then I try to also, my app is also based on this concept of the logging interruption type is also. The late next update will will introduce the the interruptions, interruption Management module, which is basically logging the type of interruption and the time, it's a little bit easier for the user instead of writing, okay, it's basically still an effort, but you will have everything stored in the cloud. And you are able then to gather data, and aggregate. And you finally have a picture of a weekly/ monthly interruption types and trends. So this is a good monitoring tool. But still does require some work, okay? It's facilitating that.

 Francis Wade 33:10

It's not fully automated, or fully automated, and AI and device independent platforms all talking to each other. Because it's the ecosystem that the problem is not one, you know, because I couldn't be talking with you here. And over here, I'm getting interrupted by what's going on. So

the two need to be in at least communicating with each other so that when it picks up that and I've left my laptop and the key stop moving and mouse stops...it knows that oh, look, he's on TikTok on his phone. And it records all of that, you know, this isn't high technology.



Francis Wade 33:48

But why do you think it is that the social media apps ...I mean, they made huge progress in the last 20 years. But since 1995, or whenever Csikszentmihalyi wrote his book we've made like, no progress. Why is there so much progress on the one side of social media and no progress on the human side, which is what we really want? The most important thing we want, why is there been no progress? What's your sense of the reason why?



Manlio Guidice 34:21

Okay, there are I think that many contributor is a social contributor, the cultural contributor. So it means that the huge amount of users of social Tiktok or whatever on Facebook or whatever it compare to the one willing to do deep work willing to reach a flow state understanding what flow state is on the first instance, understanding of their home personal capabilities and potential, I think the percentage is getting lower and lower. And, and for this reason, when you have a limited amount of users and testers and willing to pay or any sorts of also the investment is moving toward what is more profitable. And, and, but, and this is a flying wheel. So because social media gathering, driving users to user with data is, is used to improve in a very, very, very fast way compared to the original flow concept. And, and, and among tools that have been already made... My app is willing to do something, but I need really a huge amount of data to, to improve and to do the same.



Francis Wade 35:43

Yeah. So I hear you saying that there's not been an investment in productivity tools in the right way, I can also see that the science hasn't been quite there. Like they've the interruptive sciences, the social media science, the social graph, all of the brand new thinking that goes into social media has made a big jumps and leaps and bounds, there's been a huge investment in that. And there's been not that nowhere near that level of investment from here we are, you know, us being doing our best work in terms of being productive. It's like the science has been ignored, I hear you saying that there's not been an investment. There's good cultural problems of, you know, what's worth investing in what's not. I think you also, we've also talked about you and I look for attempts that people bring to the party. They're not, they're not understood. So, you know, we think that work should look a particular way. Like it should work between certain hours, it should be done in the office. If it doesn't happen there, then it's not you know, there are many bosses who believe that your best work needs to happen between nine to five. There's nowhere else on a on a weekday and or else, nothing else that you do outside of that counts...which many of us now know is nonsense. Our best work can easily come from a weekend ..., I spent weekends to get into the flow state. Can't do it the same way I can. I can't do three or four hours of flow state on a weekday.



Manlio Guidice 37:32

Same here. Yeah, but even for the listener as well. So maybe you look some are you're working over the weekend. But again, besides there are different people in different okay. And if I am my entrepreneur freelancer, right, I mean, I own my own my, my job anyway. But reaching flow states, again, we go back, you mentioned flow states during the week like weekend is enjoying is really self fulfilling is, is a good thing. It's not like okay, is working on to produce a report in Excel or whatever is numbers in Dover, Sunday night, or Saturday night writing numbers, because of someone told to do so with the before Sunday morning. So again, the drive is different, and reaching the flow state is self sustaining.



Francis Wade 38:31

Right? I feel the same way. Although, you know, someone looking aon might say, hey you're working on a weekend! The kind of work I do for the weekend, I tend to do longer creative projects. Really fun. You know, the fact that I, I like to do that, and I'm an entrepreneur, like you are, should be taken into account by some app that helps me to organize my time. And it should, I should be able, it should be able to. And I've seen people talk about this, I've never actually seen it done. But they should be able to get a sense using machine learning that I prefer to have a track record of doing these things on Saturdays, I work in a particular mode, I do particular things. So when I use either an auto scheduler called SkedPal. So ultimately, Sketchpad should be able to read my schedules and say, Well, you kind of hurt to do these things. So let me suggest that you spend a Saturday doing this thing. I found this creative project, which involves some creative stuff...video, and you can create it there and it's not routine stuff. It's creative. It's fun. So I suggest that you do that over the weekend as opposed to working on some routine activity, like balancing your books. Requires flow state as well. Unfortunately,



Manlio Guidice 39:53

you see, reduce errors, but that's not the ultimate thing.



Francis Wade 40:00

Because missing is gamification that we are very weak at self-gamifying which is why we fall we fall into the games that others create for us. So, you know, TikTok tock is highly, of course, highly gamified, right? They this put everything into it than the kitchen sink in terms of gamify principles and design, design, logic and philosophy. They ram it in there, right? This is why it's so juicy. But here we are. Pencil and Paper? And keeping track of it on a piece of paper, we're like, yes. Same here. Is that the state of the art for doing well? Scratch things on a piece of paper, because, you know, it's, it's, we're very weak at gamifying ourselves.



Francis Wade 40:56

So I'm not suggesting that somebody needs to do it for us. But if we know that, for example, getting 10 hours of flow state time for the week is transformative, then okay, well, let's make a game of it. Make a game of tracking that you get those hours. And at the end of the week, when you do a report or whatever review, you say, how did I do? Did I get my 10 hours in...a


simple, simple game. It doesn't take any investment, it can still use pencil and paper. But it's as if we haven't, we haven't caught up. We are where we're watching the You know, the Facebook's and the TikTok. On Instagram, we're like, Whoa, yeah. Whoa,

 M Manlio Guidice 41:43

When when I mentioned that engineering design, they are acting on immediate rewards and chemicals, which is very hard to transpose into the flow concept. So because when when they, if you if you notice the time ago, not so long ago, also a Gmail in the phone. So to refresh your Gmail page, main page, you need to scroll down like this, like you have the rolling wheel and you are there like, who is going to write me now? You check 30 seconds ago, because earlier because it's a sort of waiting on this reward like a same as a slot machine is the same thing. So you do something to do or waiting for something in dopamine levels are increasing the the concept of TikTok, the concept is perfectly designed based on this model. So you don't know what those snacks and things that is coming next is giving this little bit of dopamine, this little beat of satisfaction. So you know, in order for you to scroll again, and again, and this is addicting is indeed addicting.

 Francis Wade 42:58

Right, it almost calls on us to be better engineers of ourselves. Because if we don't do it, then we'll always be failing to reach our potential. Because someone is someone else creates a better, more dopamine filled experience for you. And they keep using data to make it better and better. They're, they're always way ahead of where you are in terms of doing what you think and you know, is the most important, then you're always trying to play catch up, and you're always losing, basically.

 Francis Wade 43:34

So we need a kind of internal not just knowledge, but an internal ability to engineer our selves, our activities. So that at the very least, we minimize the effect of TikTok and other kinds of juicy interruptions. And we maximize so at least were in the game of rebalancing the power of our own intentions to do great work versus the the others. And we're also putting in the time of the type of reminders on the other hand that if we over invest in the flow state and we go 15 hours straight and then we hit we hate even looking at the laptop after that, that we're able to manage the execution of it on both sides effectively. So we have to engineer ourselves

 M Manlio Guidice 44:30

Yeah. So, the earlier is energy management is we have a total amount that they were talking about willpower is a limited resource willpower is depleting during the day... is the same concept is energy is driving willpower there is another study linking willpower with the sugar intake like to increase willpower you take something sweet, so again, energy management if we are not balancing the energy during the day you can start like It depends on chronotype. Of course, this is linked to the previous topic of chronotype. You may have energy in the morning and then in the afternoon we're completely off of /..., or the opposite. And but again, alternating

studies are actually when when I post on Twitter, many, many studies linked to the effect of physical movement and mindfulness and relaxed breaks during the day on productivity on focus on so it sounds like I mentioned earlier is the sounds, you're losing time taking five minutes of breathing of mind was in but is synergic. There are studies and when you go back, you're you're ready to take on new to take new challenges more effectively. So there are different studies moving moving is is more physic because you move. So you are you you're activate some neural neural neural pathways that are different. So if you break, you just relax your mind and maybe after five minutes of break like mindfulness session, you go back to work, you have a eureka moment, because you are just disconnected the light is like the shower. I don't know if say, I think you are aware of the shower moment. So the best ideas are coming. When you are. Yeah, yeah, you know that I got one. Waterproof postit. For for the shower, they sell even that one, and I got one is in the shower is waterproof, you have a pencil, you don't have a penit's made for that. Because if you have an idea, something oh, I need to do this, then you can write. And so it's that's why I altered the app I develop is based on that alternating period of focus, flow state with physical movement, physical breaks some and mindfulness sessions for the mind to recover.



Francis Wade 47:10

I that makes great sense. Because we're talking about the kind of mindfulness that's not like being in a meditative state. It's like a meta, a meta level, second order mindfulness, which is how you manage your opportunities to be mindful that when you're interrupting the flow state that you're going to use TikTok. At that moment, you're not being mindful. So the question is, how can you manage your mindfulness at this second level, at this metal level, so that you're less likely to you to interrupt the flow state to go use TikTok? How can you arranger your schedule? How can you arrange your interruptions? How can you use an app like the one that you're designing? How can you use the app to manage your mindfulness throughout the day?



Francis Wade 48:09

So it's, it's, you know, we, like I said, we talked about mindfulness in terms of being mindful in the moment. And being aware in the moment, and that's great. But what we're talking about is okay, how do I engineer my environment? At the second level, so that mindfulness is more likely. And on my un mindfulness, is that a word ?Non mindfulness, non mindfulness is less likely.



Francis Wade 48:40

So how do I manage my environment? And I think, I think part of this has to be, it has to be software. Because software is a part of the problem with interruptions. Some of them are coming through software, we thought we can you know, with our paper and pencil, we just can't manage data. We can't collect data on paper and pencil, enough data to really effectively move the needle. So we have to use...it strikes me, we have to use an app. We don't really have a choice here. Otherwise, you're left kind of empty handed trying to change this meta level. Is that is that is that one of the motivations for your app? And I'm wondering,



M**Manlio Guidice 49:26**

Yep, yeah. What I'm trying to do with the app is, okay, we all know that movement is good for our health, we may know that mindfulness is okay. We have a gadget like this, that they are vibrating every hour because they need to do an X amount of steps every hours. The problem is this is a perfect example. This thing is vibrating when it fields so but in if I'm doing something, yeah, because it's every hours or every hour. Um, I don't know when the algorithm is, is attendees vibrating as I have to stop anyway, I have to look, okay, just walk, I'm doing something else I just mute. And then I do what are the.

M**Manlio Guidice 50:13**

So it is the integration, as you mentioned, we need to use software, well integrated with less impact, negative impact on what we are doing as a core activity. That's why the app I develop is basically it's a productivity app in the on the first instance, and then it's trying to integrate the physical moments, healthy habits and mindfulness into the day with the giving back something because you need to always give something back to the user.

M**Manlio Guidice 50:45**

So maybe coaching the user how to reach a flow state for a longer period of time, because not everyone from one day to the other is just able to sit them focus for 30-45-50 minutes straight. So starting slowly, collecting data from the user inviting the user to stop and then a good and healthy energy management. And, and just following and bringing the user to healthier habits. So inviting the user, can you do this break now then you go back to work. And then if you're able to focus you your focus will improve and the interruptions you log? Well, I give you something, you'd give you some tips, I need to some suggesting how to remove those interruption over time. And this is what what I'm trying to do, actually. So yeah, so getting back something to the user.

**Francis Wade 51:42**

Yeah, well, I think I think the users would love it to help, you know, some feedback and data on how well I'm doing and opportunities for improvement. That, you know, right now, we just don't know and how. And we, we need to take a leaf out of the book of the TikToks of the world, which are they're using data effectively. And they're using new ideas and new principals, new technologies, and they're using them, they're combining them all to squeeze out that extra five seconds from us. And we're, we're not armed with anything as effective paper and pencil and a decent memory and a couple of anecdotes. And that's what most of us are using.

**Francis Wade 52:23**

So it strikes me that the only way we can engineer ourselves is to have the data and to have the technology support. That will in turn if it doesn't manage the other technologies. So back in episode 11, and 13, I talked about... 13. I talked about interruptive technologies like alarms.

But yours won't necessarily be an interruptive technology, yours will be a data gathering and suggesting changes to make. So you're using the data that it's gathering and then suggesting that you make changes in the following way based on the data that it's being collected.



Francis Wade 53:05

So we will be far better off to have and this has to be the future. We you know, we how can it be that we are going to be jumping off sort of a flow state, because there's some fancy something out there that caught our attention? Is that our future? Can we really do that? I kind of think so I have to think that the tables are going to turn and that we're going to be able to say...be able to use apps like yours to really improve our capabilities. And I think the there's a second bell we're bringing out on Bella is that we have to use an app. That's what would supercharge our behavior changing. We can't do this just based with a pencil and paper only. That will take us only to like maybe the very first level of improvement. But to get past that level, we need major assistance, which is that we need the assistance that's geared towards helping us not disrupting us.



Manlio Guidice 54:00

Okay, use the technology. The way I mean that was a good way. Yeah, exactly.



Francis Wade 54:08

Right. Manlio Lo Giudici...



Manlio Guidice 54:14

Yeah. Okay. It's fine.



Francis Wade 54:16

I got it. I want to thank you for coming on the show. How can people find out some more about your app?



Manlio Guidice 54:25

Thanks to you, for instance, for this interesting call, and well, my website at www.thinkfit.app and there we are on social media, Twitter, mainly also Instagram and Facebook page. But in on Twitter, you will find a lot of scientific research related to sanitary behavior and mindfulness and the effects on productivity. So this is a good point where



Francis Wade 54:52

I really want our listeners to kind of get the notion here that this is not about a single app that you download and then News, we're really talking about the movement here. You may call it a counter a counter interruption counter movement, you may call it whatever you want. But it's a, it's a, it's an empowering of us and what we want. We're observing that the social media companies are extremely empowered to do what they have to say they have a huge budget. They have scientists, they have data, they have a huge advantage. And they're using every scrap of that advantage to move ahead.



Francis Wade 55:33

Just witness the growth of TikTok and how it's changed over the last few years on how fast this changed. Now, quickly, it's become addictive to so many billions of people. And we're just trying to claw back some advantage for us, and doing our best work. And doing it consistently and getting what we want in life and persuing our intentions.



Francis Wade 55:57

So I would call this you know, it's more than a single technology. This is a movement that Manlio is, is leading and heading up. And in I can, I can only hope that I'm around long enough to see the table's turned because they are. It's an extreme situation right now. And I've got to think that it's got to change and turn around and something's got to happen in our lifetime.



Francis Wade 56:21

So I'm hopeful. Thanks. So thanks. Again Manlio, this is Francis Wade, and stay tuned. Let me tell you a little bit more about the other offerings that we have here at the at the Task Management and Time Blocking Podcast. And also I want to tell you a little bit about our next episode. So keep listening.