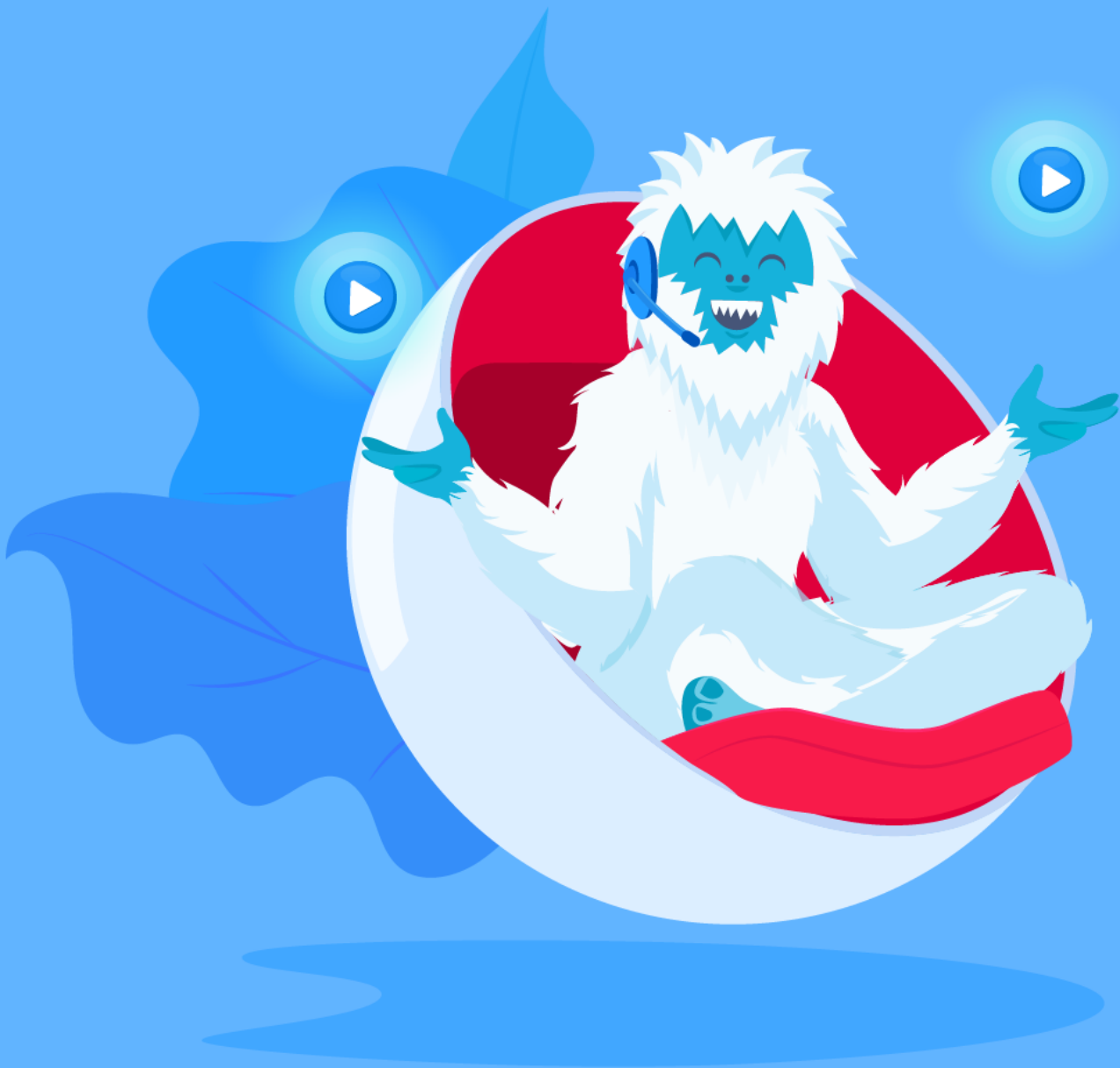




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Beating procrastination and boosting productivity | Prash Kotecha

- Well, hello, and a very warm welcome to this very special, power-packed mini webinar on beating procrastination and boosting productivity, especially for small business owners and entrepreneurs.

I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Prash Kotecha. I'm an international wellbeing and conscious leadership expert, coach and speaker. I'm also the CEO of StresstoSuccess. And over the past 30 years, I've experienced and learned a thing or two about productivity, time management, wellbeing, and mindset techniques. And during this short, but powerful webinar I'm going to share with you some techniques that you can put to use straight away.

So, let's get straight to it. I hope you're present. Bring your notepad or pen and we will get straight into some of these techniques. So, first thing. Let's get clear on what we're going to learn today. Some of the key objectives we want to learn through in this session is to learn to understand procrastination more, deconstruct it a little bit, unpack it because once we understand what's happening with procrastination, we're able to get the rocket fuel to ignite our productivity.

We'll then look at some key areas of getting our goal set and the execution chain while making sure we're eliminating distractions and better prioritizing and delegating and moving into that area where we can start to get the progress and productivity that we truly deserve.

So key benefits from the session. We'll get unstuck from procrastination. You will get better momentum and resilience in your goals. And thirdly, you'll get more done with less stress and better prioritization.

So let's start with procrastination. Now, look, we all procrastinate in some way or shape in an area in our lives and whatever it's our finances, or relationships, career or our health. And we've all been guilty and experience what that can be like. But here's the problem. Too many people try to rush into productivity and becoming more productive without really understanding why

procrastination was occurring. And then they fall short or they stop or they get derailed.

So what we want to do is take a few moments to unpack procrastination and really get to the heart of what's going on. That's going to help us to get unstuck. Now there's three parts to this.

Firstly, the self-audit. You want to identify what you're procrastinating on the most. Now it could be any particular area, right? In a particular aspect of your business it could be reaching out to new clients. It could be a particular aspect of your career. It could be something that you've been stuck on for a while. What you want to do is ascertain which areas of your life or business or career are causing you the most pain because of not following through. That's going to help you to identify what you're procrastinating on, to identify what that is.

Secondly, we do some self analysis. Why do we procrastinate? See, here's the thing, all of us procrastinate. And there's an underlying reason for it. And what we want to do is get in touch with the emotion that shows up. That's a great way to get to understand why we procrastinate. And invariably, it's an incarnation or a version of fear. It could be fear of failure. It could be fear of what other people will say. It could be fear that you're not good enough for this particular position. It could even be fear of success. It could be that you don't want to get to that position because if you do, then if you succeed or if you achieve that career goal or that income or that revenue mark, people will start leaving you, you'll be kind of be lonely up there and people will judge you. So whatever it is, try to identify why you procrastinate. And you start by getting in touch with that emotion and then go and recursively ask yourself why it is. And you may find then the excuses that surround that why.

Thirdly, we need to get self clarification. Once we've got our what we're procrastinating on, once we know why we're procrastinating we need to get clear on why we need to be more productive. You know, there's a famous author Simon Sinek who wrote a whole book on knowing your why, it's a best seller. And it's so important to pin back this because otherwise you may start on your journey to productivity but you'll lack the rocket fuel, the impetus, that drive. Or you start and then you get derailed along the way, your resilience fades. So knowing your why starts by understanding and revisiting your values, your vision and your mission.

So as a business owner or an entrepreneur why did you get back? Why did you get into this? Why did you start this journey? What road are you on? And what is it that you wish to achieve? You know, it could be you're doing this for somebody you know, you care for, it could be because you've got a mission to make people's lives better, your own life better, but it's really getting in touch and it's really getting in touch with your emotions. And this is a little bit of emotional intelligence. It's an area that I specialize in coaching and training it. So I'm a big fan of using your EQ, not just your IQ but your EQ, your emotional intelligence to get in touch with your values, your vision and mission and get motivated. Once you understand what that is what you do is you underpin and tether that productivity goal with your values, your mission, and your vision.

Okay, now what happens next once we've got that far? So the next step we've got to go for is defining your plan. So defining a plan and all of you as business owners or entrepreneurs will be no stranger to planning, but I want to share a concept called the Big 3 and MITs.

So the Big 3 and this is a fantastic way to look at it, is it's defining your three goals for the next month or quarter or year. And many of you have heard this analogy, you know your big three rocks. And you've seen this, you've probably seen the parable or the analogy where a professor takes a large vase and he asks people what's the most and there are rocks and sands and pebble and he asks people what's the best way to fill it. And ultimately the most efficient way to fill it is actually put the big rocks in first then the smaller pebbles, and then the sand when you do the sand first you're missing out on all the important things. And therefore what you want to start looking at is meditate on what those, what your big rocks are. What are three big rocks for your next month, for your quarter or for the year ahead. And invariably you want to make sure there's no more than three.

Okay. So focus on only three rocks at any one given time. Identify what those three big rocks are. Goals in your business, goals in your sales, goals in your personal life. One of them might be a health goal to support your business goals, whatever it is identify those three big rocks, those three big goals. Then you want to, again tether your vision and mission to that goal. Why? Because when we do that, we're able to tap into a certain type of grit, a certain type of resilience that helps us when things get tough. We're not going to get so derailed if we don't achieve our goals, if we don't get through the three big rocks in the next week or month or year, we're not going to get put off, we will

dust ourselves off, brush our shoulders of the dust and get back on the horse and try again and refine. And that's obviously the art of tenacity the art that every business owner and entrepreneur knows and values and loves.

Everybody we look at as an icon out there in the world has had to undergo this turmoil and find their grit. And that's what we do by tethering the vision and the mission.

Then of course, we want to make sure that these goals are smart. Most of you will be familiar with the acronym but let's go through this again. That should be all these goals should be so important for these goals to be firstly the, it's so important for these goals, it's so important for these goals to be SMART.

Specific, measurable, achievable, relatable and time-bound. So use this metric to ascertain the viability of your goals, how specific they are. They need to be time bound. They can't just be, if it's a goal without a time limit then it's going to be like a dream. So you want to make sure that your goals reflect the SMART acronym. And just go through each one and take them through that specific, measurable, achievable, relatable, that means tying it back to your vision and time-bound.

Now, once you've got that we want to start to convert the goals into milestones because that way they're on your schedule. They're on your calendar. They're not just something out there. They're going to be something that you want to put into your calendar across the weeks or months. So you know that there's a target. And then obviously you make your plan. And just two quick tips here you want to micro chunk your goals into meaningful steps.

And I call these MITs, most important tasks. You may have heard that acronym. So what you're doing is you're taking your three big rocks and you're breaking them down into your MITs. And typically each day of your working week is filled with MIT's most important tasks for the day. eventually most important tasks for the weeks, all of these build up and lead you towards that big rock, that big goal that you want to go for. Okay, and of course you want to make sure that you have these milestones and you diarize that time.

Okay. let's move on to a big, big challenge for so many of us. Eliminating Distractions. Now I know, I know that I'm not the only one here who gets distracted and I've been having plenty of that in and out of the workplace and for yourselves too, especially during difficult times and crises where we've had pandemics and we've had people working so closely together in one household it can be easy to get caught up with distractions.

So what we want to do is eliminate these distractions and build momentum with a couple of techniques. It starts by getting us into a focused mental state. So a couple of tips, number one, learn to isolate yourself. Now it may or may not be easy depending on your work environment. If you're in an office you may be able to find a room or a quiet cubicle. If you're working from home then you may not easily be able to do it. So what you want to do is find a spot in your working space where you can just be alone. Nobody can disturb you, nobody you can come along and ask you questions. If you've got a room then put a sign outside, do not disturb. And what you want to do is just make yourself unavailable not for the whole day necessarily but it could be for an hour or two at a time. And of course we may have family demands. Colleagues may need you, but what you want to do is pull yourself out for a finite amount of time. And we'll go through that in a minute. So firstly you isolate yourself and put yourself in a I'm not available situation from other people.

Secondly you go into aeroplane mode. What do I mean by aeroplane mode? Our phone has an aeroplane, as you know, it has an aeroplane mode. You can switch it on and obviously it stops any phone calls or any data being used. So visualize that self for that for yourself visualize yourself being in aeroplane mode. That means what? That means that perhaps you don't look at your emails for a certain amount of time. Okay? You don't look at, you turn off certain, you turn off certain notifications. You don't switch on your social media. You know, the great thing is that with all this technology that can overwhelm us there's also great technology that can help us. There are many apps available on most phones that allow you to suppress notifications and alerts. Even apps that stop you from using certain products like Facebook or Twitter. So these are fantastic little tools that you can use to make sure that behaviorally you're able to cope for an hour or an hour and a half in being in that aeroplane mode.

And that's where the power of momentum comes. When you're undistracted from people, from notifications, from alerts, then you're able to bring your focus, that limited focus that we all have. I mean, our cognitive abilities have a certain threshold. So we're able to focus those thresholds, concentrate those abilities onto the task at hand. And really bring the power of focus into what we do.

And that leads us onto the 3/90 principle. So the 3/90 principle is this. The night before any given working day, prioritize your top, prioritize your top

three activities your top three activities for that day. It could be your top three MITs as we discovered, your top three most important tasks. You do that the night before you take rest. And the reason why you do that is at nighttime our subconscious is starting to open up as we prepare for bed. It means that you're able to tap into power that you may not even realize. And remember, 90% of our behavior, our activities, our decisions, our choices, everything we do is dictated by our subconscious mind, not our conscious mind. So when we get into this, as we prepare for bed we're able to tap into those really key things that are going to be important. And we're almost like programming our subconscious mind to be ready, like a homing beacon, to be ready to focus on those things better focus on those things the next day. So identify those top three priorities for the next day.

And then the next morning execute that first of those three priorities in 90 minutes sprints. Why 90 minutes sprints? Because 90 minutes is widely regarded as the safest and most effective interval for which you would do a sustained period of work. If you do it any more than that typically our cognitive faculties, our emotional faculties start to have a negative impact. You know, we start losing attention. We may get distracted. We may not have as much brain firepower as we had an hour and a half before. So an hour and a half is a good time. And I call that a sprint, right? You're doing hour and a half sprint, and then you go take a break or you go and do something else. So that's one principle to play with.

The other principle to try is the Pomodoro technique named after famous professional and financier Pomodoro. The Pomodoro technique just basically means that you work for a very specific finite amount of time. Typically they say 25 minutes and then you take a deliberate structured break for a very small amount of time. And then you repeat, it's characterized by these much smaller intervals of 25 minutes typically. So you work for 25 minutes. All your distractions are turned off. As we described in step one and two, you've isolated yourself, you've gone into aeroplane or do not disturb mode. And then you focus on something for 25 minutes. And for five minutes you take a break, check your emails if you have to, but take a break or do something different answer your calls, deal with anything and then come straight back and then you do another 25. And so what you're doing is you're cumulatively reaping the results of a much more productive way of working with less distractions and therefore more focus. And therefore you're able to amplify the amount

you get done in the same amount of time that you previously could have gotten done. So I hope that makes sense for you.

So let's now move on with we've got so far ourselves in a steady state. We've got ourselves in an area where we're not going to get distracted. We know what we're going to kind of focus on in terms of our big three for the day. Now let's look at some techniques for prioritizing and delegating.

I'd like to introduce you to the Eisenhower Matrix by President Eisenhower. It's a fantastic matrix that allows us as a business owner, as an entrepreneur, as somebody who has so much risk of task saturation that is too many tasks to be done in too little amount of time. It allows us to be able to sift through that confusion and be able to step back and see and evaluate what things we really ought to be putting our focus on. And this is the power that can come out of this simple matrix. You know, its power is in its simplicity. And let me walk you through this. So what we have is we have an X and Y axis. The Y axis is a axis that denotes the importance of a task, starting from the bottom where it's not important, right? Going upwards to where it's important. The X axis focuses on the urgency of a task, things that are most urgent and then going to the right, things are increasingly less urgent. So here, the matrix gives us this high-level view.

If something is important and urgent and this is for example tasks with clear deadlines and adverse consequences if they're not completed in a timely manner, then those things should be done straight away. For example, you may have an angry stakeholder or a big client or a big pitch to get done very quickly. So this would fall under your important urgent, do it straight away.

Then, you've got stuff which is important but it's not urgent. So these are things that are, that don't have a particular deadline but they do help to bring you closer towards that particular big rock or that long-term goal that you have. Now, those things. And a good example of this for example is researching a new competitor, following up on potential leads or a joint venture, a JV that you have and reaching out to those individuals. Sure. Those things are important, but they're not urgent. So those things should be scheduled.

Then we move to the bottom left here, things that are not important, but they are urgent. So tasks like this that do need to get done but they don't necessarily need your expertise per se in order to get those things done. And look, you may think of these. For example, if you're on a business trip, booking

a hotel, attending quarterly business summits or conferences, certain Zoom calls, perhaps things where you don't necessarily personally have to be there and they could more easily be delegated. You know, a great thing as a business owner, especially as a solopreneur or a small business owner, tell me if you've related to this where you end up wearing about 15 different hats. And you're meant to be the CEO and business owner as well, right? Social media, marketing, business development, sales, technology, tech support, relationship management and you name it. You're like this one man band or wizard of everything. And then you don't really get that much done. And yet, is it not the case that you may have seen in your own life or experience with others that some of these things are far better traded off to somebody else? We call it economic arbitrage. If you have your work and your work is so valuable. Let's say at \$100 an hour. Isn't it far better to give your social media or your other tasks that's maybe \$25 an hour to somebody else. So this is the art of delegation. So if it's not important, but urgent delegate it.

And last but not least on the bottom right we have something that's not important and not urgent. Now, these things are distractions. They're distracting you from your achieving your goals. They may not be that important. I can think of plenty of examples. I'm sure you can too: endless conference calls, endless seminars, Zoom meetings, particular hobbies that you may have that are distracting you, particularly bad habits. For example, binge-watching on Netflix or something of this nature. What you want to do is, again, as we did before in an earlier section of this webinar, we want to go and do an audit, do a mini audit of those things that you know are causing you distractions or are not that important. Even in the workspace, those things that you feel that they're just nice to have, those things, put them away. Delete those, because it'll just distract you from staying productive and building on that productivity. Brilliant.

Let's move on to something rather difficult for some people, learning to say, no. I know I've dealt with this for so many years and many of my coaching clients including busy executives who are supposed to, you know, these are senior people, they often find it very difficult to say no even to their own downline. So this is something that, you know, you would not be alone. So many people experienced this. And it's one of the things that many of my clients find a challenge to deal with, to say no. But we're going to look at some strategies to actually do this.

And first starts with a great reason to learn to say no more, to flex your no power. Learning to stay no more often will enable you to conserve your limited resources. We all have limited resources. You're going to be able to conserve those resources, that finite resource, mental, emotional, physical, practical, logistical, financial, all these resources are going to be better conserved when you learn to say no. You'll also be able to increase your productivity by learning to say no because you're going to be less distracted. Your resources are less thinned out. Naturally, that will mean that you'll be able to reduce your distractions because there's less things called upon you. And ultimately and so important. Especially in this day and age, you'll be able to have less stress. The less stressed out you are, the more productive you're likely to be and the more you're going to get be able to be focused and achieve more in the same amount of time.

So learning to say no is super valuable. And that's why we want to do this. And you know what learning to say, I like to call it this way, say yes to less. This means you've got to learn to say no to invitations to attend conferences or events, invitations to all those birthday parties that perhaps you don't necessarily need to attend. All those Zoom birthday parties. Maybe you narrow down on the ones you truly attend, your close family, your loved ones, your close friends, your business associates, but others maybe you just pass and you just politely decline. It could be ventures that you've had. How many times have you had somebody say, if you put your money here you'll make, you'll do great. If you join me on this deal, you'll do wonderfully. Or if you join me over here, we can start this new business, this new opportunity, and it's going to help you to achieve this.

The fact of the matter is that we're always going to get some sort of invitation or solicitation of our time, our money, our attention through our inbox, through social media, through human beings, it's up to us to become more judicious in how we navigate those opportunities and learn to say no more often. How do we do it? Say it with grace and empathy.

For example, if somebody comes to you and says, could you help me with this, this and this? You could say no, but what I could do is at the weekend I can help you with this. Let's say a friend came and said, could you help me move house? And I need this and I need that. Can you help me for a few days? You could say, look, no, I can't do this right now but at the weekend I could help. It could be somebody gives you a project or a timeline saying, no, I can't do that

but I know somebody who can help you with this particular thing. I'm not the best person, but I do know somebody who can.

Or it could be for example, a no because, right? Sometimes you don't have an answer, so you just want to give a no in a, you don't have an answer or a solution. So you at least have a empathetic no, because. No, because I've got these other priorities right now and if I step away to help you in this adventure or this opportunity or this task, then it's going to distract me from these goals which I've set for this week. So you're always learning to say no in a graceful way, with empathy, with understanding so that you're not harming the relationships but you're also learning to practice, you're learning to practice the importance of being assertive. And so people learn.

The other side benefit of learning to say, no, is people learn to respect their boundaries with you. And it's a great way to learn boundary management. So people don't overstep their mark. They don't call upon you when they ought not to, when you know you're tied up. Such a powerful tool to do this. Find ways to practice this. And I would say not only in your business but also in your personal life, because let's not forget, for many of us that which affects us in our personal life, affects us in our business or, you know, in our career. And that's an inevitable connection that we have. And of course, those things that affect us in our business or career can spill over into our personal lives. So learning to establish boundaries by embracing our no muscle, saying no more often but gracefully and with empathy is a powerful way to establish those boundaries and thereby conserve those resources and start to build that productivity we want.

Here's a simple tip, try practicing no, at least once a week in a graceful way. Say yes to less. Find little things that you can learn to say no to just little things. And the more you're better at doing no to little things, you'll get better at saying no to bigger things. And therefore you'll be able to really focus on those three big rocks or MITs that you've got set for the week or the month or the year ahead.

Lastly, I want to leave you with this one: the five-second approach. And the five second approach is very simple. If you're not sure how to say no, or if you're worried about it and somebody approaches you just take that five second gap count down from five to zero. And that will give you a certain emotional release to allow you to say no more easily. It's also a great way to avoid reacting to somebody's question or response or invitation and instead

responding to it. So we're shifting again in emotional intelligence. We want to shift from reaction to response and it'll put you in a more empowered state.

So we're nearly there. With everything we've discussed, we cannot succeed unless we have the right daily habits. You see, we can be more productive by reducing our stress and building our resilience and to reduce our stress and to build resilience, one of the most important things we can do is to have a daily routine, a morning routine.

Plan your day and try to feature these key things. You're all familiar with them. So we don't need to go into detail here, but quality sleep, not just sleep, but quality sleep more so than just the quantity. Exercise. We all know that. And by exercise, we're not just talking physical exercise but exercise for the mind and the brain. Cognitive exercises that you can do to stay sharp. Meditation. And you can substitute meditation for recreation as well or a hobby or a pastime that gives you a sense of peace and stillness that allows you to switch off. And that can be just as good as a meditation.

And of course, I've added here journaling. Now you may or may not enjoy or be familiar with journaling but journaling could be as simple as doing a status report but for your life. We're all familiar with status reports in our business, in our businesses and our careers. But here I'm inviting you to do a status report on your life. It's journaling a couple of realizations for the week. What worked in the week? What didn't work? And I do this with my clients regularly. What worked, what didn't work? What can you do more of? What should you do less of? It's like a state of the nation once a week.

Doing these things, these practices here will set you up for a cognitive sharpness. They'll recharge your physical batteries and therefore top up your resilience tank and therefore keep you to be less stressed and more productive, keeping that momentum going on.

So wrapping it up, do the forensics, know your what and why. Use pain and pleasure for acceleration and drive-through. Make sure you define your three big rocks and tether those to your vision and mission so you don't fall down or get derailed. Make sure to go into aeroplane mode more often not just physically, but digitally and physically both. Try out the 3/90 and the Pomodoro techniques. And then of course, as always, as every entrepreneur or business owner knows, learn to flex, refine, try again and refine. Try out the Eisenhower Matrix for better prioritization and delegation. Flex those no muscles. Say yes

to less and you will find your productivity skyrocket. And last but not least, don't neglect that self-care. That's the glue. That's the foundation. It will give you the strength, the resilience to help you to put you on that road, back to productivity.

So I hope you've enjoyed this webinar and I invite you to start to practice at least some of these techniques straightaway. And I assure you that within a matter of days and weeks, you will see your productivity rise. Like you've probably never done in months and years before. I hope you've enjoyed this seminar. Stay in touch, reach out. It'll be great to connect and connect soon. Take care. Bye for now.