

Bonni [00:00:00] On today's episode number 41 Dave Stachowiak and I discuss what to do before you act on all that you've captured.

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Bonni [00:00:19] Welcome to this episode of Teaching In Higher Ed. This is the space where we explore the art and science of being more effective at facilitating learning. We also share ways to increase our personal productivity approaches so we can have more peace in our lives and be even more present for our students.

Bonni [00:00:46] Hello this is Bonni Stachowiak and today I am joined by.

Dave [00:00:50] Dave Stachowiak. Hello.

Bonni [00:00:51] This is a little bit of a part to show although Dave and I and our podcasting experience have found that it's kind of better to treat each episode like it's a separate one. But if you had a chance to listen back on Episode 32 Dave and I talked about something called capture.

Bonni [00:01:07] And by all the productivity gurus that's the idea that we have all this stuff both coming at us but we also have a lot of stuff that just comes to our mind and in fact we can actually generate some ideas in our minds and be able to get them out of our heads and recorded somewhere.

Bonni [00:01:25] So we can tap into our more creative potential and have less stress. So Dave that's kind of where we left off. But again if you haven't listened to that part the show is still fine to keep on listening to but you might think about going back and listening to that Episode 32 to get some of the specific techniques that Dave and I talked about with regard to capture.

Dave [00:01:46] Yeah so now that we've captured it what do we do with it which is our focus for today's show and how do we process all this information that's coming at us now that we've grabbed it somewhere. Our son Luke would say grab those guys grab those guys.

Bonni [00:02:01] I'm going to go grab those guys. Yeah so we're I've been listening to this linguistics podcast by the way and it's very interesting sort of in different languages how gender gets ascribed to objects and how that actually influences how people perceive things.

Dave [00:02:17] Interesting.

Bonni [00:02:18] That's a topic for another day.

Dave [00:02:19] Probably to could link to this show.

Bonni [00:02:22] When we last left you in the episode we had captured ideas and we had to do's and we had phone calls and we had e-mails there now all recorded in these different places.

Bonni [00:02:34] And I liked the way that David Allen describes it. I used to think that we should only have one inbox which as we started to transition into the virtual world was never going to work out because you'd have your physical inbox sitting on your desk and then you'd have your e-mail inbox at a very minimum.

Bonni [00:02:50] But I like that he prescribes this idea that says have as many in boxes as you need and no more. The title of this episode is do this before you act on all you've captured.

Bonni [00:03:03] So Dave what is it that we want to do before we start doing. What do you want to stop ourselves from. OK I got this all the stuff to do. I'm going to start doing it. What do we want to do before we start doing.

Dave [00:03:13] Well for me one of the things that I'm thinking about is how I'm organizing and categorizing the things that I have and how I'm making sense of them. So that probably as you were talking about having the different inboxes I was thinking I probably have four right now.

Dave [00:03:32] That are things that I collect in place that collect stuff and places and they think two of them really require me to actually do some

organizing and processing of things the rest of them are more just you know moving on to the next step kind of thing.

Bonni [00:03:49] In an example would be you have a box. I mean you have a voicemail on your on your cell phone. You've got a voicemail on your cell phone. And what happens after a voicemail gets left and you could kind of consider that to be your inbox.

Dave [00:04:01] Oh it's funny. I don't actually think that it's an inbox and and generally nothing. That's because I don't think I get my voicemail very often because I get so little of it these days mostly e-mail.

Dave [00:04:11] So I guess e-mail while e-mails one of them my Omnifocus list is one of them my my Instapaper list is certainly one of them. And then there's a physical inbox right now that monitor that we're using right now of just bills that are stacked there so.

Bonni [00:04:29] I didn't realize that for you your voice mail on your phone is one of your weak points too. You didn't say that word but that's the way I perceived it. Is for me too. It's all because I'll listen to it and then when you listen to it of course the unread. I mean that's not what it's called.

Bonni [00:04:41] But that little indicator goes away that there's a new message there out of sight out of mind. And one of the areas where I could improve is as soon as I see that voicemail in my case go right to my to do list my task management system which listeners might remember I used to use something called Remember the Milk.

Bonni [00:04:59] That's a simpler tool to get started with a less expensive tool to get started with and that would be on a Mac or a PC and they've got your various apps for your phones and such. And now Dave and I both use a tool called Omnifocus which is Mac specific.

Bonni [00:05:12] But whatever that tool is. And there's so many different task management tools. Once it comes in get it somewhere where you actually are going to look at that how many times a day would you say that you look at Omnifocus.

Dave [00:05:24] I look at Omnifocus six seven eight times a day.

Bonni [00:05:28] So that's something that's probably probably not going to get lost for either one of us if we take that voice mail and capture it then into our our main task management system but again for both of us we don't get that many voice mails and so a weaker point in our system.

Dave [00:05:41] It's a perfect example too. I'm just looking at voice mail right now and I have a trimmer friend from two weeks ago that I haven't responded to. And I sort of forgot about it.

Dave [00:05:50] So I'm glad we did this up so I'll just step away for a minute. Call her back.

Bonni [00:05:57] So two things we want to do we want to clarify and I'm using language right now from David Allen's Getting Things Done my entire time and task management system is not entirely based on Getting Things Done.

Bonni [00:06:09] But a pretty decent percentage of it is based on that model so he says before we start that doing we need to first. Stop ourselves from doing that and clarify and process whatever it is so whatever this voice mail means whatever this e-mail means whatever this paper is or whatever's going on in my brain that I have. I've gotten out of my brain.

Bonni [00:06:29] And then we need to organize it and put it where it belongs. So in this episode Dave and I will be talking about the process that we go through to clarify all the actions that have been captured in all of these different systems that we have.

Bonni [00:06:43] I have more than you have Dave. I'll be sharing about some of those. And then how do we organize that and have some tips for those of you who are looking to become a little bit more organized in your digital life.

Bonni [00:06:55] For how I mean it's sort of for mistakes that I've made in the past so you cannot do what I do and skip that step of getting your yourself pretty disorganized and start from a little simpler. So again right now the point in time that David are going to be starting from is we've got our computer bag in my case things are in folders and my computer bag on a good day.

Bonni [00:07:15] Other days there's stuff in the computer bag and I take the computer out I hook it up at home to my main monitor and then there's just I'm sometimes scraps of paper or whatever but it's all in there my folder sometimes falls out of the bottom of the folder.

Bonni [00:07:28] That's part of the problem too and it's crumpled up in the bottom of the bag because the laptop crunched or whatever. Dave knows on a good day. My purse is processed and stuff doesn't go in there that doesn't belong in there but we have two small children.

Bonni [00:07:42] Both under the age of well we've got a 3 year old and a 1 year old. So who knows what's in the purse. Any number of children's socks and spoons and pacifiers and that's probably where they all are we keep talking about pacifiers disappearing.

Bonni [00:07:58] My purse, hopefully stuff isn't done that doesn't belong there e-mail inboxes. We both use an app called the drafts app which we talked about on the episode 32 that has its own inbox. It's just basically like a scrap of note paper if you will the Evernote inbox.

Bonni [00:08:16] I use the app Evernote. We both use Omnifocus that's our to do application which has its own inbox and I talked about that remember the Melk task management also has its own inbox so whatever task management system you're using might have its own idea of an inbox that here's where stuff sits until I process it.

Dave [00:08:34] Yeah, I think one of the key points here is to find it have one like homeplace that you. Everything else links back to for me that's Omnifocus. So for example I do a weekly review every week and I clear my inbox a couple of times a week for tasks.

Dave [00:08:51] All of those reminders are an Omnifocus I pretty much live out of Omnifocus on a daily basis and so there's a reminder in there to process my inbox there's a reminder in there to do my weekly review. There's a reminder in there to water the plants hit everything that needs to happen on a daily basis.

Dave [00:09:08] There is not one to check my voice mail and clear that that's why I don't think to do it which I probably will add that in after this conversation.

Bonni [00:09:14] So I'm sitting here talking about. Oh wow we could do a weekly review.

Dave [00:09:20] That's the kind of thing and I actually I'm really you know we're joking about it but I'm actually sort of proud of the fact that I have forgotten about that because I've become so dedicated to having everything in

Omnifocus and by the way Omnifocus as you know isn't doesn't have to be your system.

Dave [00:09:35] Just have a system where everything goes there and if it's not there it doesn't happen and if it's there it happens. And that way I don't have to think like OK what do I need to remember to do today. I water the out.

Dave [00:09:46] You know all those kinds of things are just there in the system. And I trust it and I know that it's taken care of. And so I don't really worry about it if it's not the system. If I haven't created a task for it it's not that important.

Bonni [00:09:57] One of the things we're doing which Dave is describing this is for each item that's in these various boxes thinking what action needs to take place what's the next action or as I'm reading through this e-mail from a student is the student telling me something that I need to act on.

Bonni [00:10:14] By the way there's a great book which is a management book but totally applies with students. Oh gosh. Something with the monkey on your back I'm going to flip over to Amazon to revisit the exact title of it.

Bonni [00:10:26] But it's this whole idea that in the case of a manager.

Dave [00:10:30] The One Minute Manager Meets the Monkey.

Bonni [00:10:32] Yes. There you go.

Dave [00:10:33] Ken Blanchard.

Bonni [00:10:34] I'll put a link to that. And the show notes which by the way are going to be at teachinginhighered.com/41. So this idea is more of a manager with their employees the employee comes to talk to you and says oh I have this concern or whatever and they leave. And all of a sudden there's a monkey on your back.

Bonni [00:10:53] And the way it's supposed to work is the employee comes and the monkey goes back out the door with them on their back. And as a less experienced manager many of us have played a role like that in our careers might be able to relate to realize.

Bonni [00:11:05] And wait a second to have too many employees especially if you've expanded your span of control that's what it's called in an organization.

The number of total people in your department or division that report to you if you don't get in the habit of making sure that monkey gets back on the proper back.

Bonni [00:11:20] You're going to just get buried with stuff and really start letting yourself down buddy your employees down and really letting the organization down. So it's a bad habit to get into the same thing with students.

Bonni [00:11:30] There are many times students aren't doing it with some kind of malicious intent but just many of them don't want to stereotype because we have a very diverse student body. But there's a decent percentage of them that their parents would take those monkeys right off their back.

Bonni [00:11:45] We've heard the expression the helicopter parents before and try to rescue them save them and it all came from a loving place. But if they're used to somebody else hey I got this monkey on my back. You know I'm trying to get it on your back.

Bonni [00:11:56] It's really healthy for you to help them realize that they actually are capable of resolving a lot of challenges that they have and trying to push back and a professional and not an impolite way but to get them accustomed to because that's going to be really good habits for them too as they get into the workplace.

Bonni [00:12:12] Being accustomed to Hugo and you talk to your manager. I'm not saying the role of a manager is the same thing as the role of a professor. But there are some parallels in some areas and for them to become accustomed to I don't go to my professor and expect them to solve my problem.

Bonni [00:12:25] So as I'm reading the e-mails I'm kind of looking for is there an action here something I committed to do or something the students asking me to do in my case by the way sometimes it might be something like there might be an excused reason why they missed a quiz if they missed a quiz because they something happened that they should have known about.

Bonni [00:12:43] It's just. No it's not going to happen. But there might be some legitimate reason I had a student who had the flu is documented doctors note that kind of thing of course will extend the quizzes that were due that week. For me it takes a little while to log into our learning management system to say it's a bit of a weakness in our system.

Bonni [00:13:00] If I'm going to log in there it's going to take me more than two minutes for me to log in go to two different quizzes extend the due dates for that one so that's at least ten clicks per action that I'm talking about sets approximately 20 clicks total and just to even log in and get in there.

Bonni [00:13:16] That's more than two minutes. So for me that's not I'm not going to get that e-mail and oh I'm going to go reset reset Joe's quizzes. I'm going to say no and take this action that says reset these two kids isn't going to put it in Omnifocus. And one of the powerful things about Omnifocus.

Bonni [00:13:32] And about other task management systems and sometimes you can kind of tweak them yourself is that you can have a context associated with it. So for me that's called Moodle, Moodle is the name of the learning management system that we use at our university have a whole bunch of tasks that are associated with Moodle I have 100 120 students per semester.

Bonni [00:13:52] You bet there's going to be five or six tasks related to something I need to do when I'm logged in their mind as is well I'll go through them and do them all at the same time. It's much more efficient to do that.

Bonni [00:14:03] It's going to take me more than two minutes and it's something that I can actually call this batch process. But I mean stacked together related tasks. I'm in that mode I'm in that system I'm on my web browser I'm logged in. That's a really helpful thing for me to do. So I'm thinking what action needs to take place with whatever it is I'm reviewing.

Dave [00:14:23] I think there's two areas for me that I do this the most each week. There's two different times one of them is that I do a weekly review which is part of the Getting Things Done system and I don't do it exactly the way that it's suggested and the methodology.

Dave [00:14:39] But I do complete it very intentionally and I do it almost every week. And actually I did a podcast on this from coaching for leaders a few weeks ago. Bonni so I'll give you a link. And people there's a download there on the list that I basically run through each week.

Dave [00:14:55] There's 10 or 11 things that I Check off. You know I look through all my projects look for my tasks. But I also come back to things like and it starts with what are my goals for the year. So I read through those first because that's really the starting point for everything that I'm doing around my planning to think through.

Dave [00:15:11] OK what am I trying to accomplish this year and then you know that way I'm I have that fresh in my mind as I'm thinking through everything else. During my weekly review.

Bonni [00:15:20] If you'd like to be part of the book club that we're starting you could go to a post called Getting Things Done Gets Redone which is on our blog. I'll put a link to that and the show notes too. But we already have five people who are up for joining this informal book club.

Bonni [00:15:36] And reading through the revised Getting Things Done book in April. I think that'll be a nice way for some of us that read the old one maybe even 10 years ago and now are ready to revisit what he has seen as different and still the same.

Bonni [00:15:51] And Dave also interviewed him on a recent podcast. I'll put a link to that in the show notes as well and he talked about what he sees as still the same and what he sees as different and some of those essentials.

Dave [00:16:01] And the him by the way as David Allen who wrote Getting Things Done. So that's what the book study will be about him, Yeah I'm excited to reread it and two it's been about 10 years since I've read it and be reminded of some of these principles because I don't think you ever master this.

Dave [00:16:13] So I think we're all students of productivity and how do we get more effective and efficient at being able to think through all the things we need to think through. And I love what he says about you know your mind is for creating ideas it's not for holding ideas.

Dave [00:16:28] And so getting it on paper quickly so you can free up your mental space to be creative and to do the work that really mean almost everyone who listens to the show is doing a lot of work. That's pretty heavy heavy intellectual work of adding value to people's lives.

Dave [00:16:47] And that requires a lot of RAM in your brain to do that and if your RAM is filled up with thinking about the twenty five things you need to do when you get home tonight then you're not really utilizing your creative capacity anywhere to the extent that you could.

Dave [00:17:01] And I know I'm way way more you have more creative bandwidth when I've gotten things disciplined to get them in a system.

Bonni [00:17:09] We don't want to be living up to the stereotype of the absent-minded professor it's not fair to our students it's not fair to ourselves and it's not fair to our loved ones either so it's just a really helpful thing to get in this disciplined process and as Dave said We're never done.

Bonni [00:17:23] So speaking have done on the gettingthingsdone.com site they have a store and now they have the book which is a really good place to get started so feel free to express an interest in joining us in this informal book club as we read it.

Bonni [00:17:37] The revised version of it together. And but they also have these guides and I like them because they take the entire process and smush it down to something really simple that you can hold in your hand just one sheet little guides for things and one of them is the work flow guide and it's what Dave and I have been describing we described.

Bonni [00:17:54] First capture with all these things flying at us and then getting them into as few within boxes as we can and then in this episode we're describing the process of clarifying processing what it means and organizing putting it where it belongs and the guide kind of has this.

Bonni [00:18:12] Is it actionable and that's the question I've been talking about whatever this is the email from the student an email from a grant whatever that is that I'm processing is actionable. If it is we need to get it into a trusted system where we can look at it in context and be able to prioritize it.

Bonni [00:18:30] If it's not actionable well we can delete it. Or we can save it and I've written a post called How to avoid becoming a digital hoarder which I'm going to link to in the show notes as well so you can kind of think about we don't want to save everything but we probably actually can save a lot more than we think we can.

Bonni [00:18:52] Because storage is getting so cheap. So I think it's less about that. The problem with becoming a digital hoarder isn't that we have too much digital stuff. It's that we have too much digital clutter that's getting in our way of getting to the information that we really want.

Bonni [00:19:06] So Dave and I are going to spend a little bit of time talking about how we store stuff that isn't actionable or at least it no longer is actionable. And some of the things that we go through there so one thing I

want to say is some of my colleagues and now some of you that listen to the show have found helpful a post that I wrote.

Bonni [00:19:26] Which to me seemed that it wouldn't be that interesting to people who I've actually gotten a lot of feedback on it. How do I store my stuff that's related to classes that I teach and so I have a link to that in the show notes you can read a little bit more in detail but essentially.

Bonni [00:19:40] I have separated folder systems for this class content. It's not specific to a semester that I'm teaching this class but it's templates for things or power points or quizzes or what have you there. There's folders associated with that course content and then there's folders associated with classes that I taught or sections of classes that occurred in a specific date and time.

Bonni [00:20:03] And that's going to be specific students. And when we wrap up I don't delete that by the way because that might be helpful information for me to have down the road. But I do archival have a process that I go through for archiving if I ever got to a situation where stuff was getting just too big I could eventually delete it.

Bonni [00:20:19] It's not like I am opposed to that but it's just storage is so cheap why not just have a system where where stuff stays so I encourage you to look at that post if you want to know more about how you might think about storing files related to your class content and specific classes.

Bonni [00:20:35] But in general I would just encourage you no matter what it is your story. If it's related to a grant or research or what have you is don't get carried away with folders.

Bonni [00:20:46] Many of us grew up with email when it first came out and grew up you know early in computer days. We were just used to making folders or on DOS. They called them directories.

Bonni [00:20:58] We made those for everything that was sort of a cornerstone for organizing your digital life. And today it's really evolved where folders are somewhat limiting because something can only be in one folder at a time unless I start making aliases and things like that. But I mean that the basic core 1 file goes into one folder.

Bonni [00:21:20] Well oftentimes something relates to more than one area in our careers or in our lives and so folders aren't always the best thing. And especially

for me by the way extensive folder system on my e-mail Dave is probably biting his tongue across the room because he's going to have tons of filters under.

Bonni [00:21:38] I was sort of evolved out of a system where I did have folders for everything and now start to shrink it because on our phones so many of us can get our email on our phones. Now and we have to scroll like crazy on most of the systems because it expands all those folder systems.

Bonni [00:21:57] On our computer or we can kind of shrink them down. And what's that called truncate them in some way so I don't see that ladder or nested structure of folders but on my phone doesn't do that and I'm just scrolling and scrolling and scroll.

Dave [00:22:10] And then you hit the wrong one and it puts the e-mail in the folder right above the one you really wanted to and you drop your draft. Where did that really just go. I've got to go dig and get it into the right place. Yeah I think I've got eight folders now on my e-mail accounts and one of them's just like from my work.

Dave [00:22:27] It's just processed. So I mean it fits if I need to keep it at some point I just put in the process folder and I really don't put anything in a folder list it absolutely has to have its own folder.

Bonni [00:22:37] And I mostly do that although during the semester I'll have an email folder for the semester that we're in. So right now I have 2015 spring and then under that I have the four classes I'm teaching this semester.

Bonni [00:22:52] But as strange as this might be to say at the end of the semester I'll drag them all out of their folders into just an archive folder that's not at all delineated by folders and I'll start over again. To me having it separated out by classes if I know that a student sent me a recent email but I can't remember their last name or something like that.

Bonni [00:23:13] I like just being able to click on a particular class and divide it up that way but I've found it really minimize it another place that's really helpful to minimize your folders is if you have some sort of a digital notebook system.

Bonni [00:23:25] Evernote is very popular when we've mentioned on the show many times. One note Microsoft really created a great upgrade to their one note system I used to use that way back in the day and now they've made it

free on the mobile devices and are really doing some nice things with with whatever notebook system it is you use.

Bonni [00:23:45] Have as few folders as possible and knock yourself out with tags a tag is something where I can have more than one category associated with a. Note so I might have a note that's associated with teaching in higher ed but it's also kind of related to a class that I teach in technology leadership.

Bonni [00:24:04] But it's also related to work when I can't put as many tags as I want on there and just keep my folder system simple. I have a folder called work in Evernote. I have a folder called personal and Evernote and I have a folder called reference and Evernote. And then whatever shared folders I may have. So Dave and I have a shared folder that is my fourth one but minimize minimize minimize folders.

Dave [00:24:30] Oh one of the reasons we're suggest the search is becoming so much better than it was 10 15 years ago and computers on your email client on your desktop laptop. Regardless what system you're using search is really really strong.

Dave [00:24:44] And so for just your I would also really suggest someone got this got me to this money. It may have been David Sparks from the power users podcast but I've started to use a naming convention for all my files any time I save anything to my hard drive. I have like a three step naming convention the first thing is who is the entity that created this or the person that created this.

Dave [00:25:08] So if it's something that I created it's who it's for and if it's someone that send it to me it's who that person is or the organization so it's their name and then the second thing is what it is and then the third thing is the date.

Dave [00:25:21] I know that I'm always going to be searched by one of those three things. So if I search for it on my computer I'll pull it up really easily. So I think just having some sort of naming convention for how you name files and file things that way regardless of whether you save things in folders or not.

Dave [00:25:36] It's very easy to track it down in the future. And then I think we should also mention just Dropbox is a great way to store stuff too. And both of us use that and we can share folders with each other and you can share folders with colleagues and friends and so it's a really great solution for getting a lot of information in one place and pretty easy to access and share documents with other people too.

Bonni [00:25:56] Dave and I have actually evolved to where we have Dropbox as essentially instead of we used to on windows or on the Mac have my documents. We don't really have my documents anymore might my documents is now Dropbox.

Bonni [00:26:11] Now that's not the only tool we rely on. As far as if Dropbox were to disappear from the earth tomorrow and someone hacks into it and steals every drop smell and deletes everyone in the world by the way I'm sure they have back too. But we have our own backup system and we don't entirely trust that that's always going to be problem free.

Bonni [00:26:32] But it's a really reliable service and they keep innovating and getting better. The most recent upgrade that they had is Dave mentioned how easy it is to share things and I can share things in a couple of ways I can share it. Just read only Here's a folder with things you could view as someone I was sending something to.

Bonni [00:26:49] Or here's a folder that you could contribute to and you could edit the documents and add your own documents or what have you. The sharing options are really powerful but now they've added even the ability to do some chatting with people so through Microsoft Office we could open up a word document and Dave and I could have a chat conversation through Dropbox.

Bonni [00:27:09] And be able to have some collaboration similar to what you might find in google docs I think they're trying to enhance their services to allow that. So through Microsoft PowerPoint Excel or Word files there's now sort of a chat feature that Dropbox does add added the last week or so.

Dave [00:27:24] Interesting just to kind of have I know Evernote had a chat something that came out recently I didn't hear about the Dropbox thing so cool.

Bonni [00:27:30] We are starting to see a pattern here collaboration. It's amazing.

Dave [00:27:34] It's almost like that's the way the world's going or something new.

Bonni [00:27:37] And David I didn't want this to be an omni focused show because as we said there are so many strong task management systems out there. I will say that whichever one you use I personally prefer tools that allow me to email into whatever the application is.

Bonni [00:27:55] So when I used Remember the Milk, I had a special remember the milk email if I was inside my email and it was an action that was going to take me more than two minutes to do. I don't want to sit in there in my inbox as the equivalent of me just letting my bills stack up in my physical email in front of our house.

Bonni [00:28:13] Oh yeah I'll get to that when it's just like you're not going to keep storing all those things until you need to do something with them you need a place to process them so the emails that are coming in.

Bonni [00:28:23] If it's got an action associated with it that's more than 2 minutes then I want to forward it on to my task management system so if it's got a secret email I can do that without having to copy and paste or go and re-enter the information or something like that and all the notes will come along with it.

Bonni [00:28:39] So again remember the milk does that. Omnifocus does that. I know many of you are on outlook through your institutions and outlook you can just take an email and drag it right down to the area that has your tasks and it will create a new task.

Bonni [00:28:51] From that email it's lots of different ways for us to be able to process things out of our e-mail inbox cleared out. That's called Zero inbox. And to then be able to look at those emails and not having them drive our entire interaction.

Bonni [00:29:05] But look at them in context of our other priorities and know we spoke about that during the last session but I did just want to mention those special e-mail addresses by the way Evernote has a special email address too if I want to send something from one of many many apps or from my email.

Bonni [00:29:19] I can send it to my special Evernote e-mail to its nice when we have those options to do that. As far as zeroing out my drafts as I was mentioning in this draft app which there are many apps like this just essentially open up the drafts and it's a blank sheet of paper. So there's the notes app there's different note taking naps.

Bonni [00:29:37] Lots of ways you might just have some notes to yourself that you keep on your mobile device or even a physical notebook that you carry around a lot of people like the Filofax notebooks or the Moleskin notebooks for carrying around and capturing things.

Bonni [00:29:55] But for me I just talked to a colleague this afternoon who's a friend of Dave and myself and finding out about a documentary you're going to love a documentary about in New York how hard it is to get into the preschools there and so it's called Nursery School University.

Dave [00:30:15] I have heard of this phenomenon.

Bonni [00:30:18] We're going to be watching that. You just don't know it yet. Maybe I'll be watching it alone but when I get a good book recommendation I put it in a service called Good Reads and I track on good reads books that I would like to read.

Bonni [00:30:30] If it's a movie I have a count on IMDB which is the Internet Movie Database and I can capture movies that I'd like to watch in the future on there. So those are not something I need to take action on right now but I have a place oh here's where I go to look at books when I want to start reading something new.

Bonni [00:30:50] Here's where I go to look at movies if I'd like to think about watching a movie this weekend and so on and so forth. And I actually don't use drafts actively right now.

Dave [00:30:58] I've just decided because I was spending so much time going into drafts and then putting things nominee focus I just put things straight a Omnifocus on my Omnifocus app on my mobile device so any time I think of something it goes other than it needs to go somewhere else I do that when I'm processing my focused tasks.

Bonni [00:31:13] I wanted to backtrack to one other tool that we talked about on the last episode 32 and that is an app that I mentioned called Scannable app. It's an app that's made by Evernote and I was talking about that it was a cool app but to me I associated it with just many of us with many of the apps that allow us to scan.

Bonni [00:31:36] And I didn't really realize until I started using that pretty regularly so I need to give you a quick scenario I went and taught a course up in Stockton and I was going through all of my receipts for the expense. And I laid them all out on my desk.

Bonni [00:31:50] And what I thought was going to have to happen was me picking up the Scannable app on my phone and individually going to the first receipt and hitting some button and saving it somewhere go into the second receipt and hitting some button and saving it somewhere. The third receipt I had 12 receipts or something.

Bonni [00:32:08] Here is the power of the Scannable app that I totally didn't get. The first time I talked about it picture we have our 12 receipts laying in front of us. I'm holding my phone above them running the Scannable app.

Bonni [00:32:20] It goes to the first receipt and highlights it and puts a blue bar around that first receipt. By the way it can even be that the second receipt is still in the frame because maybe I haven't spread them out far enough to be on an individual pane.

Bonni [00:32:34] If that makes sense on the picture that I'm taking it sees it it turns blue it just scanned it and impress a single thing I move it over a little bit to the right. The next receipt turns blue. It just scanned it. I go to the next one. It turns.

Bonni [00:32:49] As soon as something turns blue you can have a whole stash of papers there. You're not pressing anything. You're just hovering your phone over whatever it is that you want to capture. And for me I think about there's a pretty regular time during the semester where I might have students working on something in class maybe a case study or something like that.

Bonni [00:33:07] I really don't like working with a lot of paper. And it used to be that I'd bring it home to get to bring up my scanner and my scanner always takes a little while to connect and bring up the software make sure the settings are right and everything. It's a pain, with this Scannable app literally be able to go boop. Boop boop done into Evernote or wherever I want it to go.

Dave [00:33:26] Pretty neat.

Bonni [00:33:27] I'd encourage you to check it out again. I didn't even get how powerful it was just the simplicity of capturing a lot of different scans without even press any buttons.

Dave [00:33:36] We're being quite geeky on this episode.

Bonni [00:33:39] Yes.

Dave [00:33:40] I think we're going to for those who are still listening or they're either writing feverishly or they're banging their heads against a steering wheel going. No more apps.

Bonni [00:33:51] I don't think we mentioned that many apps. We should have an app limit.

Dave [00:33:55] And we should.

Bonni [00:33:56] Cut you off for five years. Here's a big thing that I think Dave and I both have taken away from this whole idea of processing what it is that's in front of us related to actions. The way that I used to do it in my Franklin Planner days.

Bonni [00:34:13] Was to put a due date for everything and they fit and get it done on that day I'd copy it to the next day and copy it the next day well then get tired of copying it to the next day and I'd be flipping back and forth between three different pages that had tasks on it. We can transfer that over to a virtual life too.

Bonni [00:34:29] And say I want to get this done this week it's got to be done it's got to be done. But it doesn't get done and then we either go and redo the due date because that wasn't really the due date we just thought it'd be great to get it done this week because it is important to us and then we have the snowball and we have a system that we can't trust.

Bonni [00:34:47] By the way I will say I just I messed up. There was a conference I really wanted to apply to present. It was the perfect conference. It was fairly local. It was San Francisco. I thought I could have gotten up that I could have done that. It's hard with the small kids you know that to travel all the way across the country to do a conference. It would have been perfect.

Bonni [00:35:03] I messed up it had a due date on it. No actually it didn't because they said they were going to send another e-mail so I just messed up in my system I didn't put a due date and I missed their other e-mails I missed seen it just still can't figure out how that happened.

Bonni [00:35:16] But that's another story for another. But the way I though I have a system that I trust if something has a due date on it it's really due on that day. If it's important for me to get done this week it's crucial.

Bonni [00:35:29] It's I really want to get it done it has a flag on it and most of our task systems out there have some kind of a priority or some kind of a flag. I use priority's or flags for things that really need to get done this week. I only put a due date if it has a due date that it has to be done by.

Dave [00:35:48] I mostly do that but there are things that I really are essential for me to get done in a day but I really want to get done that day that I do occasionally but I do that on so because otherwise I just won't pay attention to it and I'm getting better at that. But still working on it.

Bonni [00:36:03] That's one of the big getting things done is to have a system you can trust. And when we start lying to yourself about deadlines we're lying to our system too and then we don't trust it. This is the point in the show where we give recommendations and I have a couple of recommendations.

Bonni [00:36:18] One is read or reread Getting Things Done. I'd encourage you if you want to think about joining that group. We're going to be just real informal about it and read it during the month of April and have some exchange of virtual communication and see where that goes. Or just read through on your own.

Bonni [00:36:34] It looks I'm already Chapter 2 I think and it's good it's a good read. I'm looking forward to it so that's one of my recommendations. I'd also recommend buying a set of the Getting Things Done guides. They've been very useful to me. I model a lot of my weekly review around that and as I mentioned before check out the Scannable app.

Bonni [00:36:52] Cool.

Dave [00:36:53] And what do people do if they want to do the book club. Maybe I zoned out and I just missed it.

Bonni [00:36:58] You just missed it. There's a post I'm going to link to in the show notes that they go to and put in the comments that they'd like to join.

Dave [00:37:04] Okay cool. Awesome. I think I did that already so I'm good.

Bonni [00:37:07] Yeah.

Dave [00:37:08] Cool and my recommendation is somewhat unrelated to this conversation but just a bit I've been having a lot of fun with a new app that I'm

using. I do a lot of writing every week and so the app that I'm using for writing is called Ulysses and it is great because it is kind of the best of both worlds.

Dave [00:37:27] It is a very lightweight text editor so you can have writing with lots of without a lot of extra formatting and extra extra extensions and things like that you don't need from like Microsoft Word for example but it also has a lot more than just a basic text editor and I found that the filing organization system.

Dave [00:37:49] With it is stellar and I've really enjoyed using it and writing with it and it's already helped me to be a lot more efficient in my writing workflows each week so and one really cool thing is it is it looks the same on the Mac as it does on the iPad so you can write and go back and forth to their place so it's really cool.

Bonni [00:38:06] It has been tempting me. I'm hold enough one tech tool per semester I try but I don't live. I'm definitely going to be something I'll be checking out over the summer if not sooner.

Bonni [00:38:19] I'd like to thank everyone for listening to this episode of Teaching In Higher Ed if you'd like to access the show notes and comment on anything about this episode. It's teachinginhighered.com/41.

Bonni [00:38:31] The episode that was sort of part one for this is teachinginhighered.com/32 talking about how to lower your stress with capture.

Bonni [00:38:40] If you have any feedback in general on the show you could do that at teachinginhighered.com/feedback. I would love to hear from you. I welcome your ideas and what you're taking away from the shows and Dave and I just thank you for listening to us speak out a little bit and getting things done. We hope it helps you have less stress and be able to be more present for your students. Thanks again for listening and we'll see you next time. And thanks Dave.

Dave [00:39:05] My pleasure.

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