**What it means to me to be productive**

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What does productivity mean to me? Well according to Oxford Languages Dictionary it means “the state or quality of producing something, especially crops.” This definition is great and all but I’m not dealing with crops very often. To me productivity is getting any work or tasks assigned to me done quickly and without procrastination or cut corners. This doesn’t mean I have to take no breaks and I must be solemn typing away at my computer producing work. Simply put, being productive to me is simply just taking the earliest moment I can to “Eat that Frog!” (Tracy, 2007).

This quarter I have learned that there are many ways people say you can improve your productivity, but most of them boil down to 2 things: self-discipline and planning. With these two skills you can accomplish anything. If I were Brian Tracy I would probably say “It takes a lot of self-discipline to sit down and eat a frog, and I don’t think I’ve ever heard of someone eating a frog without first planning how they were going to do it!” When you break it down to it’s core like this being productive sounds easy, but we all know that for most of us being productive can be a difficult task. The most important thing I learned this are strategies to have more self-discipline and strategies to make planning much less a daunting task.

“Here is a great rule for success: "Think on paper."” (Tracy, 2007) Let us focus for the moment on planning. How much do you typically plan out your day? How much of your day is wasted versus productive? For those of you who do plan your day, how much of it do you write or type down somewhere versus how much of it do you just think about? The act of writing down your goals or plans even in the short-term grounds them and generally makes you more likely to follow through with them. Planning out your day with specified times for your work can make your workload much easier to digest. If you start your day with the plan of getting three important things done you are much more likely to actually get three important things done, it is that simple. But how do I choose what things to do? Simple! “Eat that Frog!” (Tracy, 2007) Take your biggest baddest meanest task and do that one first, this might seem overwhelming at first, but we can make that simpler. “How do you eat your biggest, ugliest frog? The same way; you break it down into specific step-by-step activities and then you start on the first one.” (Tracy, 2007) Just like the quote says, break down your objective from 1 big, massive meal into a mouthful, then break that mouthful into individual bites, then get to work! Now what order do I do these tasks? I like to use the snowball method for these subtasks, do the quickest easiest task first, then the next biggest and so on building momentum and then by the end of it you’ve finished the whole thing in no time at all!

My biggest obstacle in reaching my peak productivity is my ADHD, sadly there is not much I can do for that one, the second biggest obstacle in my way is my tendency to get overwhelmed by the list of things I must do and being mentally frozen like a dear in headlights. Since about halfway through this class I have been using Microsoft To-Do to make a list of every assignment I have due this current week, then in the morning I select 3-4 of those assignments and put them into a list that must get done by the end of the day.” Seeing yourself working progressively through your list motivates and energizes you.” (Tracy, 2007) I can confirm that this statement is accurate after using my To-Do list method, the little bits of dopamine you get from ticking an item off the list helps keep your brain happy and in work mode for the next task. Some days I put too many tasks on my list and can’t get them all done that day, other times I tap into that flow state and get a lot done and add even more tasks to my list just because I have the time and energy to get them done that day instead of later.

All this planning and prioritizing and self-reflecting is great and is a great first step to getting all the productivity you want out of your day-to-day life but as I mentioned much earlier the other equally important component to being productive is self-discipline and just doing it, all the planning in the world won’t help if you don’t stick to it. This is the biggest challenge with the To-Do list, when I lay all my work out on the table there is so much of me that simply does not want to follow the list and get things done, but you just have to do it, as a wise being once said “Eat that Frog!” (Tracy, 2007).

**References**

Tracy, B. (2007). *Eat That Frog!: 21 Great Ways to Stop Procrastinating and Get More Done in Less Time* (2nd ed.). Berrett-Koehler Publishers.