Episode #313 - 6 Common Productivity Challenges and How to Avoid Them

Thank you for attending today's episode of Money Script Monday! My name is Sara Sullivan and I am the Licensing & Contracting Manager here at LifePro Financial Services. I have been with the company for almost 21 years so whether you've been with us for a while, or are a brand new advisor, hopefully I can bring some of my knowledge and experience to you in clear and concise manner.

Today I thought we would kick off the new 2024 year with a bang, because we know it's going to be a busy one. The goal of this presentation is to help you become as dynamic and constructive as possible, all while lessening the ever-growing stress levels you face every week. A bit of this may be review for some of you, but for a lot of us, repetition of the fundamentals gives us the best chance of forming solid habits.

As is with pretty much everything we do at LifePro our entire function is to do the legwork for you. Hopefully the findings I've collected will free up a bit of your time to do what you do best: and that is sell! So let's just get right in to it. Here are 6 common productivity challenges advisors face, and tips and tricks to avoid them.

Challenge number one, perfectionism. As a bit of a perfectionist, I call myself out on this one. Excessive perfectionism and fine-tuning every single detail multiple times, while it may seem like you're improving the quality of your work can actually make you less productive. Many times you take on too much instead of delegating for fear of the task not being done "right" regardless of a colleague's professionalism. When appropriate, delegate or outsource tasks to others.

Also, it's helpful to stop comparing your work to the work of others and acknowledge that there can be many right ways to solve a problem. Perfectionism frequently holds you back from showing up and even trying.

In many instances you develop a mindset of "what's the point" because it will never be perfect. It's times like these where in order to move forward, you must shift your mindset from perfect to progress.

Challenge number two, procrastination. In today's busy, hustling world, things like anxiety, burnout, lack of sleep and even depression can lead to the predicament of procrastination. We have all put off something that has needed to be done at one time or another and if you've put yourself in a pinch, your quality of work can suffer greatly, not to mention the high levels of stress that accompany the moment.

Procrastination regularly affects those with a present-oriented mindset rather than future-oriented. Now I'm a firm believer that living life in the moment is a really good thing but not necessarily in this case. So how can we implement a shortcut or routine to help us avoid that last minute panic? A few ways, actually.

One of those is to "Eat That Frog" which is a book by famous author and personal development coach Brian Tracy, whom LifePro has had as a keynote event speaker in the past. It means to complete the most unpleasant tasks first, just get them out of the way at the beginning, because the feeling of accomplishment that comes from having them done automatically catapults you to the next item.

Create deadlines for long term and short term projects and stick to them. This one is really important, do one thing every day. Don't worry about making a grammy-winning hit. Just make music. Just do it and worry about the details another time.

Challenge number 3, distractions. These can be and often are non-work related external factors, of which today there are so many. We have personal emails and texts. We have social media. We have Snapchat, TikTok, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and the list goes on. Even more disturbing, all of these things send alerts to our phones, watches, iPads, you name it.

To dodge these day to day distractions, my advice is to put devices away or out of your site, and schedule in time during your day where you can step away, take a break, indulge a little and refresh your mind. Then when time's up, it is back to work. That way you won't feel the inevitable urge to get distracted. Also, maybe your workspace is in a setting with too much noise and if so, to consider altering that to accommodate your needs if possible is a more than prudent investment.

Another cause of distraction is simply having too many competing priorities at once in which case you should divide and conquer according to importance and urgency. Unfortunately distraction is a fact of life so being aware of it is often the first step to combatting it.

Challenge number 4, disorganization. Sometimes, especially at the height of business, we subconsciously can create distractions and chaos as a way to cope. But nothing positive ever evolves from that as we know. Behind my presentation that you're watching now, do you have a physical and computer desktop that looks like that famous photo of Albert Einstein's office? Well, that's likely because you been slammed and just throwing things on there with the intent to get to it later.

They key is to start by organizing items with one item and one piece of paper at a time, and one file a day even. Declutter starting with one corner. Then, implement a regular routine that maintains the organization. You will feel so much more in control of your life overall.

With emails, there are a plethora of tools available within Outlook and most of the email providers that offer a calendar for scheduling, ways to color code projects, and the ability to compartmentalize tasks. Also, hit that unsubscribe button from those piling ads to free your email space, and your focus, from being bogged down.

Lastly, at the end of each day, map out the next day. The peace of mind stemming from this simple action will both close out the current day with a positive tone, and welcome the next with a strategy. Even the great

composer Hans Zimmer told Leslie Stahl during a 60 Minutes interview that he begins creating all of his sweeping scores with just one note on the piano. It's never too late to start getting into that groove.

Challenge number five, inadequate technology. Are you experiencing crawling internet speeds? Don't have a scanner or printer, or have one but it's been broken for a month? Has a lack of VPN or virus and malware or spyware protection caused your computer to be eaten? Don't have a reliable app for hosting online meetings?

Some of you may be long overdue for getting these issues rectified and there is no time like the present. Now, if you are technologically challenged like me there are a multitude of services such as Geek Squad that can assist with getting your technology and tools up to speed.

Last challenge, number six, low team morale. If you have a team, which many if not most of you do, employee disengagement can be a prevalent area of concern, especially with so many working from home these days. According to a Gallup study I came across, organizations with a high rate of engagement experience 21% higher productivity. When people feel strongly connected to a company they are more motivated and therefore are more naturally inclined to be productive, contributing to their organization's success.

A major part of engagement is successfully creating a culture in which people develop a sense of belonging and feel supported. For this to work, the company's values need to be clearly articulated and trickle down to each team, so everyone knows what they are working towards. A greater sense of purpose will drive people's motivation on an individual level, within their work and daily tasks.

In addition, people require timely, meaningful, recognition. By letting them know their work has had an impact on business results, people get a sense they are part of something important and form a mental and

emotional attachment that becomes mutually beneficial for both them and you, their employer.

A Gallup study also found that half of workers don't know what's expected of them at work. This is why it's essential for leaders to guide their team members not just through goal-setting but also by regularly aligning with them and creating opportunities to check in. People should be able to know on a regular basis what their strengths are, as well as what they should be working toward throughout the year. Give them the necessary knowledge for them to continuously develop and improve.

Just to pull all of these recommendations and hopefully, motivations together, remember that practice makes perfect and try not to be too critical of yourself as you put these items into play. With each attempt, you'll improve, and my hunch is that after a slight period of implementing these tips into your productivity game, you will be really glad you did. Also, don't forget to celebrate the small wins and remind yourself of how far you've come. Building a positive habit loop with little things will help you maintain the momentum and motivation necessary to achieve those big wins.

That's all for today, I hope that you were able to take away some worthwhile tidbits from this session and as always, if I can be of assistance with anything that you have questions about please email me at ssullivan@lifepro.com or extension 3265. I encourage you to lean on us, as that's what we're here for and it's what we love doing. Have a great day and thank you for your business!