

Every Moment Counts: Learning About Productivity and Time Management with Alexis Haselberger

SPEAKERS

Alexis Haselberger, Lara Schmoisman

Lara Schmoisman

This is Coffee N° 5, I'm your host, Lara Schmoisman. Hi, everyone. Welcome back to Coffee N° 5. I always remember when I was a child, and my mom will tell me if you need something from someone, ask someone who's busy. And it took me a while to understand that, why she was saying it. And today, I can totally agree with her, just because you're busy, and you have to do so many things in your life, somehow, you become more efficient. It's something that you have to acquire. Otherwise, you cannot get things to do. Today we have here, Alexis, and I've met her actually in a round table not that long ago. And I just love what she does. When I talked to Alexis a first time and she told me that she was all about being efficient. Oh, my God. She's like she said, the magic word. So welcome, Alexis Haselberger, did I say it right?

Alexis Haselberger

Haselberger. So very close.

Lara Schmoisman

Welcome. And thank you for joining me for coffee today at Coffee N° 5. And I love that you talk about efficiency, and you work with people to be more efficient. So someone realized like, I'm not being efficient than they come to you, how does it work? why people come to you?

Alexis Haselberger

Yeah, so first, thanks for having me on the show. I'm so excited to get to talk to you again, and to be able to talk about my favorite topic here. So when I work with people, I help them to use their time in a way that fits with their goals and their values, right. And so while a lot of times people don't even think of themselves as being efficient or not efficient, like they're not even there yet, they're thinking, I am stressed out all the time. I'm working all the time. And I'm still not able to get done all the things that I want to get that right. And so there is kind of a mismatch between the effort that they're putting in, and the output that they're getting. And that's where efficiency comes in. Right is how do we systematize things? How do we do things in such a way that we get more out of the effort that we put in?

Lara Schmoisman

So basically, it's getting a chance to live up to that lifestyle?

Alexis Haselberger

Yeah, I mean, I think it's more systems than life hack, right? Because I think it's, you can, you can take little tidbits here and there. And that's not going to make your life different. But I really walk people through a system of kind of how do we look at all of the elements of time management and productivity, and layer on strategies and systems that work for each person? Because everyone's brain is different. Everybody's circumstances are different. Everybody's you know, like, we're all just very leading very different lives. And so we really have to say, what what are you what are you know, what does your life look like? What is your brain look like? How do you do things. And now let's build habits and strategies that work with who you are, so that you can be getting the most out of your time.

Lara Schmoisman

That's amazing. So I love to, as I know, also that everyone is different. I also believe that we're very similar in different ways that you find out like, for example, woman, or woman and certain age, or men have this any group that they tend to do the same things, or it has nothing to do with gender, or with age.

Alexis Haselberger

So I would say that most people are not like, I don't think it really has a lot to do with gender. I think gender, gender, like shows up in different ways. But it's not that people are doing things based on their gender, I think that like, you know, I will have men and I have men and women clients. And I will say that quite often, you know, I will have people that are like a mom of three and corporate executive. And you know, like, she's got all these issues, and she's got a lot on her plate. And I'll also work with like a single guy who doesn't have a family and has a job that's, you know, maybe not as demanding. And they feel the same way, even though objectively, their plates look very different. Right? And so it's interesting to me that, like we can have different amounts of things on our plate, and it can look different, but we still have the same kind of feelings of stress around these things.

Lara Schmoisman

That's fascinating, because is all about your perspective. How you see your life is I always I always tell my team that when we see a problem, I tell the same to my kids. When you see a problem, you cannot get overwhelmed with the problem because you don't see the problem anymore. You're so overwhelming with a feeling that you don't see the problems and I think it's the same here. You cannot see how you can get organized or strategize your time because you cannot. You're not efficient because you're so embarrassed in how you feel. So, like I always when we get a crisis because happens when you run an agency. They I always tell me your get so cool. I say no, I don't, I don't get cool, I just put a shield. Because if I don't put that shield, I cannot take a step back and see this from a different point of view. And sometimes it takes only see things from a different point of he Oh, in order to find the answer, because I'm sure that you're not going to tell people, here are your answers you work with them to, to find those strategies together, right?

Alexis Haselberger

And I think you know, just to bring it back to what you were saying, before we even started recording with the concept of drowning or the phrase of drowning in a glass of water, right? If you're drowning, if

you're in survival mode, it's really hard to think, logistically, and strategically about ways to get yourself out, right, you're just kind of flailing around hoping you don't drown.

Lara Schmoisman

I don't even have any more hours in the day that I can stretch myself anymore. So I come to you and I say, I have this problem. What can I do? What can you do for me?

Alexis Haselberger

Yeah, so I would say it's not about what I can do for you. It's about what you can do for yourself with me as a guide. Right? Like, you know, I that's the first thing that I would say, because I think these when we're trying to work with behavior change, and things like that it comes from within, so you need it, you may need a guide to help get you there, but you're the one who's gonna have to do the work to make it happen, right. But then I would say, let's start from a point of examining where your time is actually going. So you say I don't have any more hours in the day to devote to anything, right? There's no, but there's no room, there's no budget here. And so I'm gonna say for a week, I want you to track your time, from the moment you wake up till the moment you go to sleep. And then we're just going to look at the data in a really non judgmental way and say, What are you doing, right? And so we're going to do this for a number of reasons to start by saying, Well, what do you want to be doing more of right? What do you want to be doing less of? What are you surprised by because time is subjective. And so you know, things that we like doing, it feels like they go by in an instant thing that we hate doing, it feels like it takes forever and drags on. So we often don't really have a good sense of where our time is really going. And by tracking it, we're able to to really notice patterns that we might not have seen. So you know, I've had I've, you know, this probably not you because I know you're very efficient. But I've had you know, I worked with a tech executive. And he found during this process that he was spending four hours a day, in five minute chunks on Reddit and YouTube. He just had no idea. Right? So it's like he came in with the same feeling of like, I don't have any more time in the day, I'm always busy. I'm stretched all the time. And in reality, we were able to say, well, there's four hours right now that we can just bring back to every day it wasn't the he even realized,

Lara Schmoisman

I mean, there's times that you constantly might choose to do something because they have all the benefits. Like for example, I know that right before I go to sleep, I post certain times for reading, I'm reading something completely unrelated to my work, because that's the only way I could fall asleep and disconnect.

Alexis Haselberger

Yeah, but you're choosing to do that that's different, right? I think that that therein lies like the awareness, right? I think if whenever you are doing something that you are choosing to do, that's productivity, but I think so many of us are, are stuck in letting the day happen to us, right? Where it's like we start with our email, we start responding. We're like doing stuff, we all of a sudden at 6pm we look up and we realize we've been working hard all day long. And yet we haven't crossed a single thing off the to do list because we didn't plan our work. And so we just kind of let things that come in Come in. And so I think that's like where the the awareness comes in as we were they like what's actually happening so that we can try to figure out how to be more intentional about what we're doing.

Lara Schmoisman

Oh, I love that you said that you just said one of the my favorite words in the world that its intention, like everything we do is content with intention. Like we we believe that every piece of content that we put out there, even if it's an email or Instagram post, whatever we do has to have an intention. And the intention need to know we need to know the intention before you don't need to figure it out later.

Alexis Haselberger

No, because if you're figuring it out later, it's justification. It's not intention.

Lara Schmoisman

Exactly. And so you need to know what you want from this piece before you start in the drawing board. If you before you start writing, this should be a strategy. I mean, I strategize my days because otherwise I mean, if you see my calendar, you don't want to see my calendar but I think you will make anyone feel sick seen my calendar that I need it for you me know what's gonna happen, I need to have that plan. Otherwise it's not gonna happen. And I need to know the notifications that are gonna come out. And I need to know that certain notifications are for my son but I'm tag on it and it gives me such a relief when he Press the Done button, is not the best feeling of the world to get rid of all those little boxes?

Alexis Haselberger

Yeah, I mean, I call it the dopamine hit of taking things off of the list, right? It's like every time you click the box, every time you cross something up, you get a dopamine hit in your brain

Lara Schmoisman

I can describe in so many ways the same like I... Another strategy that I have is the flagging emails, I have flags from different emails, different colors, like for example, sometimes to get right away back, it's in certain color. And other flag is Oh, this is going to have to be taken care of at some point. But the day that I don't have flags. And I don't have emails in my waiting. It's so good.

Alexis Haselberger

I do email a completely different way than you do. But I also am an inbox zero person. And so there is a like getting everything out of there. And so I think what that shows is like you and I can both be very efficient and have different strategies for doing so. Right?

Lara Schmoisman

Absolutely. And it's not only about the satisfaction of getting it done. Also, I know because I have a system that I then forget anything else. Because I think that that's the thing that gives you anxiety,

Alexis Haselberger

yeah, the anxiety is an unknown,

Lara Schmoisman

and but it's answering a feeling that you might not do anything or something, you're missing something because you forgot. But if you have systems in place, that you know that it's there, if it needs to be done, you know that if it's empty, it's because everything is done, it doesn't mean like a in five minutes, it's gonna get full again. But you're going to get that happy dance guy that you are done

Alexis Haselberger

what you're right. It's all about the systems. And I think that's, you know, the another thing that I help all my clients do is to create a single trusted system. So what what is their system that's going to work so that yes, all of that stuff is offloaded out of their brain, and that they know exactly what they need to do and when, and that they can prioritize in such a way so that when something doesn't happen, it's because they chose to do something that was more important, not because they forgot or dropped the ball.

Lara Schmoisman

This is true story, my company last year, we at this time of the year, we got like 15 people beat here at this time, we had like 47. And we're all we always been remote, we are all over the world. So I realize at some point that I had to put very strict systems in place, and logistics and processes for everyone to work the same way and work very collaboratively. We created this process, we didn't record the process. So you have videos. For anyone new that comes they know that they need to follow the same process, because otherwise will be a chaos.

Alexis Haselberger

Right? Right. And then you also if I mean, I love that I think like this is what I teach all my corporate clients to is like, you have to have documented systems and processes. People have to be doing the same thing. Because if you don't, then you waste so much time in communicate about Oh, do you have that piece of information? Where do I find it? Does anyone know about this? You know,

Lara Schmoisman

it's frustrating. It's really frustrating. And I feel like it damages relationships. But I want to tell you something very interesting that happened from those 15 people that there were back then when we put systems in place. Not many of them stayed, they found a way to live because they couldn't live with the strategy and the system in place. They were thriving in chaos.

Alexis Haselberger

Interesting, interesting. Yeah. You know, it's true therapy, they're always gonna be people who will reject a methodology, right? But But when you're in a company, it's really necessary, because you can't always accommodate the outliers in in terms of, you know, this the strategy or the process, right? Of course, we want difference of thinking we want all sorts of diversity, but we have to follow the processes otherwise, you know, the work product suffers?

Lara Schmoisman

Yeah, well, as the company I said, any company, even if you are a solid printer, or you're a multi million company, who are all drive I make in profit. And the only way to make profit, unless you're like, super

successful, is to make sure that you don't overspend many times we're over spending in time, and that cost us time and resources.

Alexis Haselberger

Yeah, yes. 100%. I mean, time is one of the biggest the biggest issues out there. I mean, there are so many there are studies show that most people spend up to a third of their day work day simply recovering from distractions, right. And so if we can eliminate these or reduce them if we can create press and that people spend on average, like something like 50 30 minutes a day searching for document

Lara Schmoisman

Oh, like, for example, that was a big win for me, I know that the way that we nomenclature the files, I can find anything in my drive

Alexis Haselberger

standard nomenclature that everyone is using. And again, it doesn't matter what you choose as the method as long as it's standard, so that everybody knows what to do.

Lara Schmoisman

This is my question. Why it is so hard for people to nomenclature right.

Alexis Haselberger

So I think that I think it comes down to this, that you, you and I seem to be aligned on a similar value. And this is that planning is real work. And it's important and putting structure around things is important, right. And I think that a lot of times, especially with a lot of clients that that I work with that there is this sense that I just don't have time, I don't have time to rename something correctly, I don't have time to document this, I don't have time to do X, but what they're failing to understand is that they are taking a short term gain at the expense of the much bigger long term gain. So it's like it's another thing, right? People spend tons of time just not even saving documents down. And like they're just searching in their email for them, right? It's very, really common, and it takes people forever, you're always looking for things, right, looking for links, etc. It's like taking that 10 seconds in the moment, becomes hours in the future, right?

Lara Schmoisman

Okay, I gotta give you another confession, what I do, I write in your contact, I put a note how I met that person,

Alexis Haselberger

when I connect with someone on LinkedIn, I also send them a message that relates to how we met, right. So I'll say thank you so much for attending my workshop on making meetings better, or whatever it is, like, even though it's kind of silly, so that if ever, you know, that might not be a contact that I'm in contact with all the time, but it's like lives in my contact. But if they ever reach out to me, then I know how we got in touch. So I do the same thing, right? It's just Just a second,

Lara Schmoisman

it's a second or is like even when you are, this is a networking trick that when you go meet someone, and you do a follow up in the email, I always include something about the discussion or the conversation that we have. Because also if I go back to my email, so that person is a trigger that reminds me the conversation.

Alexis Haselberger

And I mean, I think there's so many places where this shows up too, right? It's like, if you have a task and your task list, put a link to the file or the email that it's about so that you don't have to search for it later, right? Like while you're creating the task, just put the link or upload the file or whatever it is, because then you won't have to find it later. Also like, right that when you finish a step of a task, I'm stamp what you did and What right does pop it into the comments of your task system. So that you don't have to remember where whether the last time I opened this project, right? What did I did I do this or not, you know,

Lara Schmoisman

so many little tricks like that, that just for me, it's been efficient. It's all about being efficient. Because next time, it's gonna take me less time. And I know that these things that we ask him for the gun sounds crazy to some people totally not really pushy for asking for these little things. But what do you send the first time, it's hard, but then they become a habit.

Alexis Haselberger

It becomes a habit. And also, you see, I mean, I'm a huge fan of template for everything, right? I mean, I think that like 70% of the emails that I send, begin with an email template, because I don't want to write the same things over and over again, I don't want to write I hope your week has been going well. So I have a shortcut in TextExpander, where I can type /ww. And it takes that for me instead. Right? Like there's a lot of little things we can do to just create efficiencies, that yes, it does take a little bit more time to set up but saves you so much time down the line.

Lara Schmoisman

Like for example, someone from my team find out about the Gmail pipelines.

Alexis Haselberger

Yeah, I have seen that tell me how you're using it.

Lara Schmoisman

I'm not using it yet, personally, but I seen how she is in it. And it's amazing. You can set up periods of time. And what's the part of the process that that that conversation between

Alexis Haselberger

is the same thing. It's that idea of a template, right? It's like you can create templates anywhere from anything. And so when they're integrated.

Lara Schmoisman

Yeah, but it's not only about the template, it's about the part of the process that conversations because we know that have an introduction, these if you're rejected, so it's a part of the pipeline.

Alexis Haselberger

I think when I say template, I mean all of that. I mean process checklist, like any kind of workflow, all of anything that can be recreated is a template to me, right? I think I just use that word really broadly.

Lara Schmoisman

Exactly. Or we even like widow, the company will learn how to do pipelines for interviewing because he never know the people are always around and then we find out that someone applied but have some familiar but I don't remember. And we started looking at the emails and we couldn't find it. So in the pipeline, we even have a note on what we thought about that people during the interview. So if it's worth to bring back or not.

Alexis Haselberger

Right, right. And I always think about, you know, anytime we do these things in the moment that set us up Our success later, it's that we're prior to prioritizing our future selves, right? We're saying I'm gonna take this little hit right now in time to prioritize our future self and our future company and our future success.

Lara Schmoisman

I love that. I really love that. Thank you so much for being here in Coffee N° 5. And I'm four prioritize your time have been here with me today.

Alexis Haselberger

Yeah, of course, it was really fun as I mean, I think you and I could probably geek out on this conversation forever.

Lara Schmoisman

I know. But let's take it offline. I think we started to scare out people.

Alexis Haselberger

So it's been great to be here. Thank you so much.

Lara Schmoisman

Thank you for joining us. If you like the show, remember to leave a review. I will really appreciate it. If you want to know more about marketing and and myself, follow me on Instagram. My handle is Lara Schmoisman. Was so good to have you here today. See you next time. catch you on the flip side. Ciao ciao.