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ABUNDANT PRODUCTIVITY

with Damion Lupo



Mike: I'd like to welcome Damion Lupo to The Productivityist Podcast. Damion, thanks for joining me today.

Damion: Mike, it is a pleasure. Thanks for having me, my friend.

Mike: I'm a big believer in the power of words and triggers. When I received a copy of your book, [Reinvented Life](#), I like the way it's optically set up on the page is really cool because it could be real life, it could be reinvented but it's [Reinvented Life](#) and you co-authored this with Christofer Ashby. I create three words every single year that I use as like my guiding principles. In 2017, I chose redesign, rebuild, reclaim. I told you the story about that before we jumped on the air here. I'm really, really happy to have you talk about some other kind of reinvention and the reinvention of life, so thanks for joining me today.

Damion: Yes, man. It's really going to be fun. I'm looking forward to this.

Mike: First off, the other books you sent me are a bit of a departure from this. They're not exactly the same as this one, in a lot of ways. Why did you and Christofer decide that you needed to get this book out of you and into the world?



Damion: Part of this is that going through my process in the 2000s when I built up a business and end up losing \$20 million, I had all of this pain and this toxic scars and things inside. I needed to get it out. I think if we go through trauma, it goes back to this thing I saw one time watching a possum. Once a possum falls out of a tree, if you watch real close, the possum will actually run really, really fast. It will shake, it looks like it's shaking but it's running really fast to go through the process, the fight or flight, and it's going through this thing to get all of that anxiety out of it system.

I didn't have something in me to create that shake. I needed some process to get all of that that fear and everything that I'd gone through, all the anxiety out. This book was me getting it out so that I could move on with my life.

Mike: The subtitle is how two friends moved from conflict and pained to consciousness and purpose. How did you and Christofer get together? Were you guys just having beer or coffee and said, "You know what? I'm having these kind of feelings. Let's co-author a book about this." How did the two of you get together and manifest this thing?



Mike: Because your story is interesting and his story is as well. How did that coalesce and how did that alignment come to be?

Damion: It came as weird because we were talking, I was in Miami visiting with him. I was sharing that I was going to write this book, and this is early 2012. He said, I'd like to write it with you, and I looked at him, and I thought, "How in the world are you going to write a book about a story, my story, and you're going to write it with me? I said, "Literally within seconds, I said I'd love to, let's do it." No idea how he's going to do it.

What I found is that we ended up going deep into a relationship really connecting us friends by sharing all of these lessons that entangled. They were really similar even though our stories are very different, we went through a lot of the similar process of reinventing ourselves, and it couldn't be more different on the outside. He was a classical musician and moved into finance, and I was in the middle of finance and moved into more of a spiritual money type of mentor for people. It was very different.

It was an opportunity I think the universe showed up with and it said, "Here you go, do you want to



Damion: do something that's radically different from everybody else's book and everybody else's story? Do you want to combine those?" It created an opportunity for us to connect and share our stories together.

Mike: It was laid out in a really interesting way because you got your different stories, your story, his story, and then the theories behind things. It's really laid out in an interesting way. I guess you could say that you guys hitting together was a trigger event of sorts. I'm a big believer in triggers. I think I use them all the time whether you use them in a technological sense so, for example, I have a trigger that I've set up recently that is set to remind me about a half hour. Sometimes, it actually depends on the day but generally about a half hour before I go to bed. It's a trigger to writing my journal. Like, it's an alarm, it's a trigger event, and that's a minor one. Trigger events come in all shapes and sizes, don't they?

Damion: They do. I tend to put things in front of me, so I literally have to trip over them. I'll snooze those triggers too often, and I know that if my journal is right in front of me, it's the first thing I see, I sit down with my cup of coffee in the morning. It's those things, that's how I know, it's why a book things.



Damion: If something matters to me, I'll book it, I book the plane ticket, I book a nonrefundable, whatever it is that matters, I make sure it's in front of me so I have to go through it. That's a big part of my trigger event.

Mike: Right. And I mean one of the things that I've talked about with my audience is the idea of using theming, like time theming when you're crafting your time and daily themes. Having the trigger of when you wake up in the morning and instead of saying, "What do I need to do today or what do I want to do today?" Such an open-ended question so having that trigger there which says, "Well what day is it? Oh, it's Monday. Monday is coaching day." It gives you some purpose. What trigger events do you remember most fondly that led you down this path of reinvention?

Damion: Gosh, the trigger events, there were a couple of trigger events that that led me to push into the space of reinventing. I was able to let go of the past. The first one was - it's the very first thing I talk about in the book, when I had four armed federal agents show up at my door and were knocking, and I thought they were coming for me, and I freaked out and hid in the closet.



Damion: When I went outside and looked for them to see if they were still there and found this envelope on the door from the tax authority realizing that I was in so much trouble, and then all of a sudden it was for somebody else. It wasn't even for me. That was a trigger event that that shifted me into a place of, "Holy crap, I'm in a lot of fear," and then I stayed there, so instead of doing anything about it, I ended up waiting for about two years.

I got fired from this volunteer campaign that I was working on a political campaign. It hadn't happened, I pretended I resigned, and that the trigger there was me filing -- I think I caught a glimpse in the mirror and I went, "Who in the world is that guy? He's literally lying to everybody and himself."

Sometimes, I think that's all it takes us seeing ourselves in the mirror and then asking the question, "Who is that?" Because we get really embarrassed about how we're showing up and living with ourself all the time, it doesn't work anymore. I said, "Forget this. I'm going to ask the question what is true," which is a core theme in the book. It's constantly asking that what was true is that I got fired. I was a volunteer and I got fired.



Damion: I needed to really fix me and that's what pushed me over the edge. I said, "Okay, I'm going to do something different," because the way that I have been is not going to work for who I am and who I'm going to be and that was the big shift.

Mike: You talked about asking questions and that recurring themes throughout the book. Again, there's that reword again, recurring. You talked about metrics, and that's a big part of productivity practices as well, in a lot of ways because people want to quantify, they want to be able to look at hard data. This is something that I struggle with or struggled with through. I'm working with clients now, I've actually found a way to quantify it, at least in some respects. It's hard to have metrics for these sorts of things that are purely, quantitative. People just want that magic pill. They want to say, "Okay. This is the problem here, let me just do this or take that and it's solved." You talked about questions being -- a lot of what's involved with having metrics towards like having a Reinvented Life. How did you come up with the metrics that you needed and what do you recommend people do, in terms of measuring how well things are going in their own lives?



Damion: Well, the most powerful question other than what is true, is what am I not seeing. We have these blind spots. There's a chunk about that in the book where I talk about the blind spots. You can find those with a mentor or groups of people or therapists or just your buddy that sees something that you can't see. It's finding those things that you can't see is the critical piece because you could think you have the best ideas in the world or you're being productive. Everybody can see something, you just can't see it because you're too close to it. This is why the best people in the world always have coaches. There's nobody that's extraordinary that doesn't have a coach. I mean even Bill Gates has a coach. His name is Warren Buffett. Everybody should have those eyeballs looking in and helping people to figure out what the drivers are that we should be measuring. I think a lot of times people get obsessed around the outputs, the key performance indicators over a life or a business.

What we're forgetting is that that's the outcome that we want to have. Those are those moments in time the success pieces, and the fulfillment part is the drivers, what we're doing the creation piece. If we can fall in love with the drivers, then the key performance indicators, the outcomes tend to take care



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Damion: of themselves but we've got to figure out what the drivers are and really, really serious about focusing on those, not just in the vision of what's going to happen.

Mike: How important are frameworks to you? I mean, you've come from a background where there is structure, and a lot of people when they go down this path of reinvention, they either don't have structure or they can't find it. How important are frameworks and structure in the process of kind of going through this reinvention process? Because the last thing I think you want to do is go in there blindly. Otherwise, you end up reinventing yourself and you end up coming out the other side going – again, what happened? [chuckles] What do you think about -- what are the frameworks that you put in place so that when you reinvent one time, maybe multiple times, you don't stray too far of course.

Damion: Mike, that the difference between somebody changing their mind and exchanging their mind, is exactly what we're talking about here. You can change your mind but if you don't change the structure, if you don't have structure, then you're just going to change your mind back and forth and



Damion: really go back to your least common denominator where you were. If you're willing to build structure, then you can exchange your mind and shift who you are, shit what you're doing, your results your entire life.

It's funny because people resist this. This is a big part of my shift. I mean, this is probably one of the most powerful things ever that freed them is based on building structure, and people go, I don't want to have the time blocks, I don't want to put in a calendar in place that drives everything in my life. That's where you create freedom because if you don't set that up, you have chaos, and chaos there is no freedom because you're always afraid you're to be missing things and you're afraid, what am I supposed to be doing? What's happening? People totally misinterpret the idea of how powerful structure is in creating freedom and that's really what we want.

Mike: It's really interesting because I say frameworks foster freedom a lot. With the methodology, I teach, you're right. Creatives are notorious for this because they're like, "I don't want to be tied down to anything." I'd love to hear your thoughts on this. As long as your frameworks have the flexibility that you need but at least some boundaries are set. I think that's all you're asking people to do is figure out what the boundaries are.



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Mike: Both the boundaries they've set for themselves and for others. It's like having a sheet of paper. You can only draw. If you don't draw on the paper then you're going to be drawing on your desk and all that stuff. That sheet of paper is a boundary. You can do whatever you want within that sheet of paper but that sheet of paper is the boundary. Is that what you're getting at here as well?

Damion: Yes. You get to pick how big a piece of paper is and where it's put in your house. I mean, it's up to you, you still have this freedom of determining that. But if you don't have any structure, if you don't actually lay that out in front of you, you're going to end up with a mess. I mean, you're not going to have anything that's worth anything, it's just going to be chaos and that's what the universe tends towards if you don't focus. If you don't have an energy and entropy, it naturally falls apart. That's what our lives look like if we don't have this type of formulaic approach where we say, here's the time. It's funny that people will spend all this time and they go, I had a really productive week, and you ask them what they did, and they say, "Well, I did this thing." You go, "Okay, there's two hours, what was the other 50 hours you claimed, you



Damion: worked?" They have no idea because they didn't really narrow in, and if we narrowed in, we'd be 10 times more productive but we don't want to do that because we're afraid we're going to kill the creative genius which is totally stupid.

Mike: Let's actually talk about the difference between when you're dealing with creatives or someone who's more -- let's say -- I'm going to paint it with a brush and say artistic, and Todd Henry will say, "Everybody's creative in a lot of ways." I totally agree with him, versus the people that are pragmatic or maybe practical and don't feel that they've got the creative components. There's that idea of success versus fulfillment. I think that some people really struggle with, and you talk about this in the book, the difference. How we get defined by success? It's really interesting.

I was actually thinking about this today as I was listening to How Far I'll Go from the Moana Soundtrack. I don't know if you've seen the movie of some members of my audience definitely will have because they have kids. [laughs] You can't avoid it if you have kids. But the song is basically saying, here's what is expected of me. Everyone else has their own role, I feel that I can't fulfill that role or that role doesn't feel right to me



Mike: but maybe I should just go with it. What's wrong with me? Why am I not going with it? How do you get past that success versus fulfillment dichotomy that people face?

Damion: I think if we're really honest about what success is, it's this moment in time. What we're missing is we don't live in a moment in time. The only time that happens is when somebody has a high school moment, and then they stay there the rest of their life and that's all they talk about over beers for the next 50 years. But that's not what our lives are supposed to be about it. They're supposed to be this fulfilling journey in this adventure. I mean it's really a hero's journey for all of us to go out there and experience this life. That's where the fulfillment is. It's the entire process, it's the day to day. If our entire focus is on, when this one thing happens then everything will be good or here's the moment in time that I'll have this outcome with my business, it'll hit this certain level then I'm happy, we're screwed.

We're setting ourselves up for a miserable existence with a maybe moment in time that possibly will be hit and then what happens, it's gone, it's fleeting, and that's the problem with all these folks is not just having these goals that are



Damion: events. We're literally setting ourselves up to spend the majority of our time in pain and miserable and frustrated, and probably on a lot of drugs trying to numb ourselves, that's why we have to go towards fulfillment throughout with the drivers are, that's our day to day thing. If we structure that, we're setting ourselves up for this experience that we're going to fall in love with versus this life that we're trying to run from.

Mike: I want to touch on a couple more things before we wrap up today. They both start with the letter S. There's two things you talk about in the book that I think are critical. I think no matter what you do in life, whether you're seeking to just continue forth with the path that you're on or whether you want to reinvent. That's the need for stillness and simplicity. I don't think enough people stay still long enough and step back, really think about things. I think that they tend to make things complicated rather than simple. There's a big difference between being complicated and being complex. There is a difference there.

Can you touch on a little bit? I don't want you to give too much away of the book. Because otherwise, people will go, "Well, there it is. Don't need to buy the book." [laughs]



Mike: It's like this is the blink version, the blinkest version of the book. When it comes to stillness and simplicity what role they play in the reinvention of one's life?

Damion: The whole idea behind stillness and simplicity, and I'm glad we're hitting these because when we think about what's going on today, now more than ever, we have things flying at us, in every second, there's a million things hitting us on Facebook highlight reels of people's lives that we're comparing our life to and these moments in time, the success moments we're seeing. We're constantly on the move, we're creating bigger and more, and it never ends, very western approach to things, it's a little crazy and we're stressed out. If we will just find a practice, and for me, that's yoga, it's martial arts and meditation.

If we find a practice, and even if it's just minutes a day where there's actually stillness, we'll start to hear things in our own minds, we'll start to feel present and grounded, and it starts to shift things. I mean, it literally changes the chemistry in our body. Deep October talks a lot about this, with meditation. What's happening is, we're killing ourselves inside out because of the stress we're putting on ourselves because



Damion: because we're going so fast and we never have the stillness. We're missing all the intuition that comes in if we just pay attention to the stream of consciousness that's there. I mean, we're pretty smart inside but we're always looking for these external gurus and these messages, instead of listening to ourselves, we've got a lot of innate intelligence that's waiting for us to hear if we're just still. That's the first S.

The other one with simplicity, usually the most powerful thing that we can do is not add something on, it's to delete something. What I call the Blank Slate Approach to Life, and this came from moving. I moved a lot. One time I was moving, and it was like the third time in two years. I looked outside at all of my piles of stuff and I went, "Oh, this sucks, and this is terrible. I don't want to move the stuff in. What do I really want here?" The question made me think, if I didn't have anything, if my house just burned down what would actually bring in here and the funny part was, it wasn't very many things, this stuff from the past was legacy stuff and it didn't fit me anymore.

Then I realized, "Wait a second, this actually doesn't just apply to my stuff, this applies to people, this applies to my thinking



Damion: so I need to really think about my life as a blank slate. A brand new canvas.” If I was to clear everything out, all my thoughts, my behaviors, my rhythms, my patterns, my people, and start over, what would I bring in? How would I think and who would be a part of my life? All of a sudden, I went, “There's a lot that needs to be eliminated and deleted,” and it cleared the space for me to start to evolve in go towards my potential. That’s what can happen if we start to simplify and hit the delete button and really ask, if we had a blank slate, which we all do every single day, what would be on it?

Mike: You've given my audience, and me a lot to think about. I'm big on the [unintelligible] as you heard earlier. Like I said, I've gone through this book. There's some great stuff in there. It's a really great read-to because the way it's designed is -- it's easy to digest. I think a lot this stuff it's broken up in a way that for lack of better term, simplifies it.

Which is a good fitting way to wrap things up. Damion, where can people find you and where can people get your book? That way they can learn more about how they can reinvent their lives starting today.



Damion: Go to Amazon, grab a copy of the book. When you have the book, there's a lot of activities there. If you go to damionlupo.com, you can download a free copy of the workbook that's the companion for the book and it allows you to engage with the book so that you're not just reading it and then it goes away to where you're really participating in your own reinvention. Download a copy of the workbook at damionlupo.com, and grab this thing in any form audible, Kindle, whatever it works for you, it's on Amazon ready for you.

Mike: Awesome. Damion, thanks for joining me today on, The Productivityist Podcast.

Damion: Thanks, Mike, appreciate it.



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