

Episode 32: Getting to the Heart of Time Management, Part 2 with Anna Dearmon Kornick

Christy Keating 00:08

Hi, friends and welcome to The Heartful Parent Podcast. I'm your host, Christy Keating. In this podcast, we talk about it all, our parenting, our partnering, and our professional lives, because they are all a part of us. And we were never meant to do this alone.

Christy Keating 00:40

We are back, we are back Heartful Parents with another episode of The Heartful Parent Podcast. And I'm really thrilled this week to be bringing you part two of the interview that we started last week with Anna Dearmon Kornick, who is a Time Management Coach.

So let me start by saying that if you have not heard last week's episode, pause here, go back and listen to that. It's about 30 minutes long. And it really dives into the foundation for what we're going to be talking about today. So don't hesitate to go back and start there, where Anna shares really the big picture that we need to think about when we want to reset or reimagine the way that we're spending our time.

For those of you who want to just dive right in today, or who listened last week, but don't remember, sort of, the details of who Anna is. Anna, as I mentioned last week, is a Time Management Coach. She's also a wife, she's also a mom. And she really works to help busy professionals and business owners master time management, so that they can stop those feelings of overwhelm, and start spending time on what matters most.

But I have to tell you, listeners, that I'm really excited because these strategies really resonated with me. And now that I have a copy of Anna's book in my hot little hands, I'm really excited to implement the strategies. I also, and you'll hear her talk about this at the end of today's episode, but also went to her website, timemanagementessentials.com, and let her know where and when I ordered the book. So that I was able to get a whole slew of extra resources emailed to me by Anna, to help me implement the things in the book. So I hope you will do that as well.

As I mentioned, today, we're going to dig in a bit more into the nitty gritty of you know, once you've identified and we talked about this last week, your boulders, your big rocks in your pebbles. What do we do with those? How do we, you know, fit them into our daily schedule into the time that we have available? Because we all have only 24 hours in the day, Hopefully, we're all getting adequate sleep. Hopefully we are all spending adequate time on self care, and with our families, etc, etc. So how do we

get all the other things in there? Or how do we get those big things, those boulders in there? And how do we make them fit and kick out some of the pebbles, which we might be spending time on?

That's what we're going to dig into today. And if what I've just said does not make sense to you. Again, go back and take a listen to last week's episode. The two go together so perfectly. And I think you will find at the end of today that you've got a lot of great ideas, and some inspiration for an autumn reset of how you're managing your time. I wish you all the best in doing that. I'm gonna be doing it right along with you.

And so without further ado, Anna Dearmon Kornick.

So, you said that we start with the values and the vision, what do we want to fill our days with? What would our ideal day look like? And then we look at what are those boulders that we need to put in? What are the big rocks that are coming up for us? And then how do we fit in the pebbles? And we probably frankly, can't or won't ever fit in all the pebbles? How do we then, like once we've sort of visualized that and gone through those steps? How do you recommend or what advice you give to people because I'm like, this is totally resonating with me. I could see myself going through this process. And then I don't know what you would call it, but I'm thinking Pebble-Creep. How do I prevent the pebbles from like, creeping up the beach, taking over waves and taking over, you know, the big rocks or the or the boulders?

Anna Dearmon Kornick

Yeah.

Christy Keating

Because they still have to get done. How do we do? Right? How do we manage that?

Anna Dearmon Kornick 04:44

By scheduling Pebble Time. You know, there are two strategies that we can use here. One is having a Pebble Power Hour and it's essentially you know, taking all your pebbles that are just outstanding And setting aside an hour in a recurring time block on your calendar and your planner once a week, and using that hour to just attack each pebble one after the other, make the appointment, make the other appointment, call about this thing, you know, submit this reimbursement make that hotel reservation, sign that permission slip, whatever it is one thing after the other, you're able to be so much more efficient, because you're containing all of these quick tasks in a tighter window.

And because you know you have an hour, you can even set a timer, if you want one of my favorite time management tools is a little cube timer. Yeah. I love it. They're so helpful. I send these to all of my new clients too, is a cute timer and you just set a timer for 60 minutes and you go, you get after, and you don't have to do a Pebble Power Hour, you can do 30 minutes, you can do whatever you need. Having

those boundaries, you know Parkinson's Law, one of the productivity pitfalls states that work expands to fill the time allotted. And so when we put a fence when, we put a boundary around our pebbles, I like to think of putting the pebbles in a laundry basket, because it's batching them is batching. Your pebbles, yep, contains it. So you go faster, and you get it done. And it keeps you from being distracted and doing a pebble randomly here and there as a procrastination method.

Christy Keating 06:26

Yep. Which, okay, totally guilty of that side note, I just want to note for everyone listening right now who you can't see Anna or me and we both held up our little cube timers. Anna's was green, mine is red. I will put a link to a [cube timer](#) in the show notes so that you can get yourself one of these fabulous,

Anna Dearmon Kornick 06:46

I love it. They're amazing. Yeah. So one thing that you can do to keep the pebbles under control is to have a pebble Power Hour. And the next thing you can do is you can take your pebbles and squeeze them into a big rock.

Christy Keating 06:59

Oh, okay. Tell me more. Tell me about

Anna Dearmon Kornick 07:00

One thing that one awesome example is having a Finance and Admin Friday, Finance Friday routine, or a Finance and Fam Family Admin. And it's basically taking all of the little financial tasks that you might do randomly throughout the week. Oh, let me check my bank account. Oh, let me move some money over to savings. Oh, let me pay that bill real quick. And when we do this randomly, every single time we switch from one thing to the next, we're losing productivity, we're losing our ability to focus. And so when you take okay, what are all of the financial tasks that I need to do in the course of a week, this is especially helpful for business owners who need to send invoices and follow up with clients. And then what are all of those family admin things that you need to do, oh, we have a birthday party coming up, let's order a gift for a four year old from Amazon. So we can have that shipped in time.

You know, you can do those all at once in a contained block. And what it does is it takes all those little pebbles and it turns it into a big rock process. So by doing all of these things at once you are moving the needle because you're taking care of your finances, your business health, your family admin, but you're doing it in a way that enables you to have a streamlined mindset. Another example is to have a tech check time block or like a communications time block. The average American knowledge worker, it takes around 90 minutes to process incoming information each day, let that sink in. That's not even dealing with things that hit your inbox yesterday that you haven't responded yet. If you look at emails and slack messages and text messages, and voicemails and messages from your kids school app, it can take 90 minutes just to process all of that new incoming information on top of everything we already have going on.

Christy Keating 08:53

Oh yes. And I get totally overwhelmed. And so like, then I get behind. I can't answer all of it.

Anna Dearmon Kornick 08:59

No, you can't. It doesn't work.

Christy Keating 09:03

And right now I'm behind because I was gone for so long. Yes, so many emails to catch up on.

Anna Dearmon Kornick 09:09

Again, we can spend our entire day just doing inbox things and responding to things as they come in. And instead, I would challenge you to create 330 minute time blocks during your day. I have this I don't always follow it perfectly. But just having it there is a reminder that when I get tempted to check my email or my Instagram DMS now is not the time. There's a time for that. I love that. And so it just helps you batch that communication. So it's not pebbled spraying out everywhere.

Christy Keating 09:44

Yep, yep. Which I get a message from a client or potential client and that just sends me off down this rabbit hole. I love the idea of 330 minute periods that are set aside in my calendar.

Anna Dearmon Kornick 09:56

And if you're looking for ideal times for those may I might recommend Dr. Pepper Time. Dr. Pepper commercials back in the day. Yeah, we used to say, you know, have a Dr. Pepper, have a Dr. Pepper at 10:00, 2:00, and 4:00. Think about that, if you remember those ads? Yeah, I mean, if you start your day, being proactive. So many of us, the first thing that we do is we sit down and we open our email. And we immediately launch ourselves into reactive mode.

If you start your day by instead determining what your top three priorities are, and getting some some progress into your day, then then check your email at 10. Then, you know, get work done, dip in for 30 minutes, dip out, get work done, do lunch after lunch to 2:55pm is the lowest energy time of day for most workers is what studies have found. We all have a natural energy dip, which is why Dr. Pepper recommended 2pm

Christy Keating

Right, right, right.

Anna Dearmon Kornick

And so it's a really good time to do lower impact work like emails. And then if you then dip in at 4:00, let's say 4:00 to 4:30, that's your last could be your last email check of the day before you shut down and get ready to close out today.

Christy Keating 11:14

Love it 10:00, 2:00 and 4:00. Okay, I'm going to do it. So, again, not everybody can see me right now. But you can. And if you look behind me you see a bookshelf full of books, because I'm a little bit of a book addict, right?

Anna Dearmon Kornick 11:27

All color coded.

Christy Keating 11:31

Yes, yes, I had to come up with some form of organization for it. But there are definitely time management books on that shelf that some are more valuable than others. And I am so excited to get your book and read it. But here is there's some phrases or some I should say, maybe not phrases, but terms that I hear frequently used in time management, but I don't know how to use them very well. And I'd love to have you elaborate if they're things that that you recommend.

So the first one is time blocking, which sounds to me a little bit like the the pebble that we've built into a rock. And I want to have you talk more about it. The second one is task batching. Maybe that's a pebble into the rock. And then the third one is theme days.

Anna Dearmon Kornick 12:17

Yeah. Okay, so time blocking task batching, and theme days are seriously the three tools in like a time management swiss army knife, because you can use time blocking, task batching and theme days to corral just about any out of control part of your day or your week.

So starting with time blocking, like simply put time blocking is creating a block on your calendar to represent what when you will do a certain task. Now this is when having a digital calendar is really important. Or having a paper planner that actually has like a vertical layout that has different lines for the different hours of the day. Because without having some type of a grid to put a time block on, you don't get the full effect because the purpose of a time block is to hold visual space for the time that you will spend doing something.

Remember Parkinson's Law states that work expands to fill the time allotted, and having a time block combats Parkinson's Law by giving you a set start time and a set in time, so that you aim to contain that work within that time block. Now the thing is, is that most of us are terrible at estimating how long things take.

Christy Keating 13:35

They're worse. Oh, I am the worst.

Anna Dearmon Kornick 13:38

I promise you're not. We are all equally the worst because there's a thing called the planning fallacy. The planning fallacy another productivity pitfall tells us that we naturally are terrible at estimating how long things take. It is not just you. It's not just me. It's literally everyone. When I learned about the planning fallacy, I can't tell you how relieved I was. Because I thought it was just me.

Yeah, but when you know that the planning fallacy exists, you're able to combat that by add some extra time. If you think oh, it's gonna take me you know, it's gonna take me an hour to prep all of the vegetables for the week. No hidden give yourself an hour and 30 just let's let's do it. Even if you think you won't need it probably will. You might as well already have it. Yeah. And then and then make your time block that length of time. Boom, you've just knocked out two productivity pitfalls at once. You have a specific time to do something on your calendar and Decision is made.

Christy Keating 14:41

I love because I was you were saying earlier that you have a to do list and today list and that you love the today list because like you can actually check things off of it. It's finite and you can get it done. Yeah, but what I find is that I overestimate what I can get done today. Right, so then it just gets in this perpetual loop on my to do list and not on the today list. And I guess now I have a reason for that because I am like everyone else and not great at estimating how long something's going to take me.

Anna Dearmon Kornick 15:14

It's like it Thanksgiving, when you pile your plate with every single, you know, casserole and mashed potatoes and peas and everything, and then you eat like half of it, because your eyes are bigger than your stomach. Yeah, it's the same thing. Like a lot of times when it comes to our to do lists, our eyes are bigger than the time that we actually have available on our calendar. So your to-do list has to jump from your to do list to your calendar.

If you want to plan a realistic day, you've got to take what's on your list and block it on your calendar. And if you say Oh, well, I have 17 things on my calendar. So it's going to be 20 minutes for this and 20 minutes for that and 20 minutes for this, again, you're setting yourself up for failure because you're not being realistic with your time blocks. Sometimes you just have to accept that you can't do every single thing you want to do in a day. And that's when prioritization comes in.

Christy Keating 16:11

Oh, my gosh, okay. Yeah, my mind is sort of exploding because I'm like, Yep, I do that I do that. Yeah, I do that I'm guilty of all of these things, and could so use some of these strategies. So explain to me

then the difference between time blocking, which we've just talked about, and task batching? Sure task batch, which goes, is that what goes into this?

Anna Dearmon Kornick 16:38

Sometimes, okay, not always, I bet that you're actually a task batching pro without even realizing it. In fact, I'm sure every single person listening has task batched before, even though you might not have called it that. Have you ever done laundry before?

Christy Keating

Yes. Once or twice

Anna Dearmon Kornick

Okay, congratulations, you are officially a task batching pro.

So task batching is taking like tasks, taking similar tasks, and chunking them together, like performing them in chunks, kind of like we talked about that Finance Friday routine, it's taking similar tasks, and it's performing them all at once during a set timeframe.

So you think about when we do laundry, we, you know, we don't wear a shirt, and then wash the shirt, and then dry the shirt and then fold the shirt and put it away and go get a pair of yoga pants and wash the yoga pants and dry them and put them away and then go get a sock. We don't do that, like that would be insane, right? Instead, we hold all of those dirty clothes, we hold our laundry in a laundry basket until we fill it up. And then we wash them all together. We dry them all together, we fold them and then we put them away in three to five business days. I mean, that's just how it is.

And so what opportunities do we have to apply the laundry methods to other parts of our life? I mean, if you are someone who travels often for work, can you sit down and batch out all of your travel reservations and airline tickets all in a single sitting? If you're someone who has to submit reimbursements, or fill out forms, can you do them all in one sitting, instead of sending an invoice on Tuesday and invoice on Wednesday morning and another one on Thursday afternoon as you think of it, can you hold all of them and invoice once a week or once a month, you know, and we can do the same thing at home.

We will, actually that bleeds over into themed days, but we batch cleaning different parts of our house on different days using a task batching. So that we know that there's a certain time to do certain things. And whenever you task that whenever you perform things, the same thing over and over again, you end up getting more efficient at it. So it takes less time.

My big example is a long time ago, I was in a role that had me writing thank you notes on a regular basis. And I was working in fundraising and that every time a donation would come in, I would say oh

love you write a thank you note and I would drop what I was doing right? Pull out the envelopes, address the envelope, get the stamp and go take it out to the mailbox. After a while that's kind of ridiculous. So I started holding all of the thank you notes for the week to Friday afternoon. And before long, I figured out that if you turn the envelope, like to the left this side up, you can stuff it faster. And it just turned into this amazing, super fast, super efficient assembly line situation and I was able to write a dress stamp and send like 20 Thank yous in the time it was taking me to do one randomly, but yeah is when you do a bunch, you get into a groove, you get into a flow. And so I would challenge you to think of, hey, what are you doing randomly that you could start doing? Like laundry.

Christy Keating 20:12

I love that, you know, and it's funny, I didn't even know that I had themed days. But Monday is my laundry day. And I do it every Monday, and I get it done. And I've gotten more efficient at it, and it's over. And then I don't have to worry about it for exactly, which is my favorite part of it. I don't always love doing it. But I love not not having to do it.

Anna Dearmon Kornick 20:33

It's like scheduling a time to worry. It's like, I don't have to worry about this now, because I know that I have time to do it on Thursday, or whatever.

Christy Keating 20:41

I have to say there are so many more questions and things that I would love to dig into. Because I am already envisioning in my own mind how helpful some of these strategies will be. And I know that my listeners are also thinking through this, because these are things that you can use, whether you're working parent, a stay at home parent, you know, don't have kids, and you're just a professional, like all of these things that you've been talking about apply. And I think can make our lives a little easier, or maybe a lot easier. So for those who are like, yes, yes, I need more. Anna Kornick In my life, where what are the best ways for people to find you and to get more of this sort of support and help if they need it?

Anna Dearmon Kornick 21:28

Yeah, so I would, I would love to invite you to tune in to my podcast. [It's About Time](#), a podcast sharing stories and strategies to inspire better work life balance. I have new episodes that drop every single Monday wherever you listen to podcasts. So that's the best place to really dig in and start learning from me to start hearing about how other go getter, ambitious people are getting things done.

And I would be so honored if you picked up a copy of my book, [Time Management Essentials](#), Time Management Essentials actually hit shelves back in June. So it's been a very exciting past few months sharing this book with the world. You can order Time Management Essentials from Amazon.

But I'll tell you that if you head to timemanagementessentials.com and share your name, email address and where you ordered your book from. I'll send you over \$500 worth of resources that you can use to implement exactly what you learned in the book, everything from the productivity pitfalls that we've talked about in our conversation today to time blocking task batching, theme days, boulders, big rocks, pebbles, vision, values, and it's all in there, I wanted to create something that was like a one stop shop comprehensive time management book that so that anyone could get the essentials, and be ready to implement and take action.

Christy Keating 22:51

I love it, we will obviously put that link in the show notes for people who you know, if you're driving right now, and you're like, what you what was that link, it's in the show notes on my website, or wherever you get your podcasts, you can find it there, I am definitely gonna get a copy of it. Because I honestly I'm like, How can I make my husband read this too help him.

Anna Dearmon Kornick 23:14

It has an audio book version too. So just like play it in the house while he's at home. And that way, he can't help it here.

Christy Keating 23:22

Well, and he will listen to audiobooks, he you know, on his commute or whatever. So, because he and I really do work together as a team. And, you know, and as I think, you know, in the, in the summit that we both spoken, I was talking about fair play in the importance of write those pebbles should not all be one person's responsibility. Well, none of them should be one person's responsibility. But sharing the tasks and balancing with our you know, finding some more balance with our partners is really, I think, an important piece of this too. So I'm gonna encourage him to listen and may even share some of this with my teenager, her schedule gets a little more dictated by teachers. Yeah, as to when stuff is due. But I still think recognizing the boulders, the big rocks and the pebbles would serve her as well.

Anna, thank you so much for being here. Like this has been a really interesting, helpful, fun conversation. And I'm so grateful to you and the work you're doing.

Anna Dearmon Kornick 24:22

Oh, Christy, well, thank you so much for having me. And I really appreciate you giving me an opportunity to join you for a conversation to serve your audience. It's been so much fun. Thank you.

Christy Keating 24:32

So great. And I think this is one of those like, we might just have to have you back in the future.

Anna Dearmon Kornick

So let's do it. Love it.

Christy Keating

Thanks, Anna.

Oh listeners, I hope that that was helpful to you. We have reached the end of this two part series, the interview that I broke into two. I hope that it made sense to you why I did that. I hope it was helpful and valuable to you to break it into two to give need time to think about, again the big picture and then move into sort of the implementation and strategy this week.

I know that I have found this conversation to be really a big aha for me with some seismic shifts or different ways of thinking about things. And I'm really excited to be working on implementing these strategies on an ongoing basis for anyone that is going to be doing that with me. Send me an email, drop me an email at christy@theheartfulparent.com.

Let me know what you plan to do, what your shifts were, where you're going to go with this and how you you know the successes and the struggles or challenges that you have with it. I would love to hear.

In the meantime, I wish you a happy autumn, a great school year with your littles your or your bigs, depending on how old they are. I will look forward to seeing you back here next week for another fabulous episode of The Heartful Parent Podcast.

Cheers