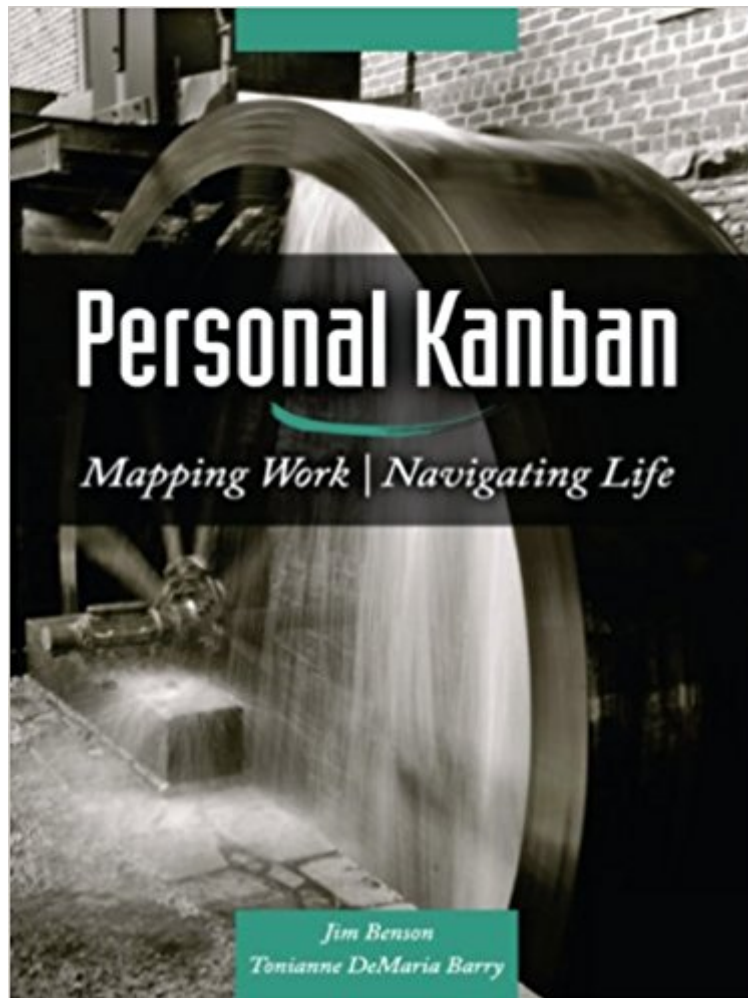




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Personal Kanban: Mapping Work | Navigating Life



Synopsis

Machines need to be productive. People need to be effective. Productivity books focus on doing more, Jim and Tonianne want you to focus on doing better. Personal Kanban is about choosing the right work at the right time. Recognizing why we do the things we do. Understanding the impact of our actions. Creating value - not just product. For ourselves, our families, our friends, our co-workers. For our legacy. Personal Kanban takes the same Lean principles from manufacturing that led the Japanese auto industry to become a global leader in quality, and applies them to individual and team work. Personal Kanban asks only that we visualize our work and limit our work-in-progress. Visualizing work allows us to transform our conceptual and threatening workload into an actionable, context-sensitive flow. Limiting our work-in-progress helps us complete what we start and understand the value of our choices. Combined, these two simple acts encourage us to improve the way we work and the way we make choices to balance our personal, professional, and social lives. Neither a prescription nor a plan, Personal Kanban provides a light, actionable, achievable framework for understanding our work and its context. This book describes why students, parents, business leaders, major corporations, and world governments all see immediate results with Personal Kanban.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've followed and tried virtually all the time management and productivity techniques and tools since I first found career and life demands were more than I could keep up with in my head. With each one I've fallen prey to losing sight of the end goal and becoming compulsive about the tool or technique -- however not compulsive enough to keep it working for me. With time, the overhead of managing the tool bogs me down. Now a month or two into the Personal Kanban technique, using KanbanFlow as the online tool, I'm holding my own. I think the difference is the core tenet of limiting your WIP, so I can't become overwhelmed (although I may frustrate those who are trying to push WIP into my flow). Aside from the practice, the book is clear and practical, with doses of philosophy stirred in with the practicality. It's definitely worth a read, and the technique is easy to try. See if it works for you.

So, I have finally discovered why I make todo lists and then just ignore them. Why my self imposed deadlines become meaningless. Why I used to be really productive and effective and the last few years have not. Why I have felt so exasperatingly overwhelmed even on days when there is nothing I actually have to do. Not just another time management system (I have plenty), but a way out of the stress and overwhelm of work that keeps coming at me. Of incomplete tasks nagging at me and keeping me awake. This book deals with the disconnect between our brains and the modern multitasking/deadline driven world. It is well written and doable. I loved the system, I have implemented it, I am sleeping better. My backlog of projects hasn't disappeared, but somehow making them tangible has also made them manageable...and I am actually getting to them one by one.

This is the book to buy. Why? Because this author invented Personal Kanban (PK). Thus he can write about it from every viewpoint that matters. I started out looking for a software product to do PK with and now believe that that may not be to my best advantage. I have a white board in my home office that will be perfect for PK. As you will read in the book, being able to get a good visual on the board is really important and no iPad is going to give that perspective. I'm only giving up portability, but that is okay because when I leave my office I'm usually off to do one of my targets and I can move that target into the done column when I return. AND I can take a simple picture if I need to take it with me. Also, having it in one place allows the whole family to gather and plan together with live communication. Imagine! Really, the Outlook calendar was not getting the job done. Although I

have been a CEO and ED, I did not have this tool available and can see easily how effective and rewarding it would have been to have. I used hand routed orders on paper that my secretary would follow up on and report back to me on. This leaves the staff out of the planning loop and thus out of a conceptual understanding of their role in achieving the goal. Personal Kanban allows the vital communication between staff members and with management to be fluid. People, in my experience, want to do their jobs well and want to be a part of a group that allows individuals to make decisions and be responsible for their part without the need for orders. PK is a focal point that fosters total participation.

Personal Kanban changed the way I think about everything I do. We all feel like there aren't enough hours in the day to fulfill our commitments to work and family life. How often do we find ourselves saying "I am so busy, I can't seem to get anything done!" How can it be possible to busily accomplish nothing? When we maintain a large backlog of existential overhead we feel stressed because we don't feel like we're making progress. Thanks to the Zeigarnik effect we focus inordinately on unfinished tasks. When we finish a task it is flushed out of our thoughts because we're constantly focused on the unfinished pile. Personal Kanban offers a deceptively simple solution to these stresses. Take all the tasks currently occupying that ball of stress in your mind, write them down on sticky-notes and stick them to a board. By writing them down you're able to see that they're not all equally important. You remove them from the amorphous stress ball inside your psyche and stick them to the wall. Suddenly you enjoy the clarity brought by simply visualizing precisely what it is you need to accomplish. A Kanban is a signboard where you visualize your work. In it's simplest form a kanban board contains 3 columns: "Ready", "Doing" and "Done". I generally reject dogmatic and/or complicated concepts. What Jim and Tonianne have written in Personal Kanban is neither. There are only 2 rules: 1. Visualize your work 2. Limit your Work in Progress (WIP) I've explained the backlog already, one of the benefits of this backlog is that you can now easily see what needs to be done, and prioritize those tasks according to what's most important to you at the time. Once you've prioritized your tasks you can start pulling those tasks into your "Doing" column. If you moved every task into doing at the same time you'd essentially have created a visualization of the amorphous stress-ball you had previously stored in your head. This would not have much value. So we limit our work in progress. This book gives some good rules of thumb and suggestions (a WIP limit of no more than 3 is a rule of thumb) but it doesn't say "There is one right way to do this." or "If you do this wrong you're a failure." It is a breath of fresh air to see authors/experts admit that all things are context driven. Everybody is different. You might do best by

only doing 2 tasks at a time or maybe you'd enjoy doing 4. The theory behind limiting WIP suggests that by doing fewer tasks at one time, you'll be able to increase your throughput. Some great analogies are drawn between what a freeway's capacity is, vs it's throughput. When we do less at a given time, we get more done at a higher rate of speed. Finally when we move the task into the done column we get to celebrate our small successes. A full "done" column feels good. You no longer focus solely on your unfinished work. This book is a fun read that will make your life both happier and more productive. It acknowledges that productivity without happiness is not a desirable way to live. Being stressed all the time impacts the quality and speed of our work. Jim and Tonianne have written a book with the potential to change the way you live and work, while putting a greater focus on your own happiness. All that and a great story about a poodle too!

My big complaint about the Kindle version of the book is that the illustrations are just too small to see and understand. I think the material is probably worthwhile, but to a visual person like me it dropped the book's score 2 stars.

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