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### S3:E5 – Steven Watson – Time Ltd

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[00:00:00] **Beth Stallwood:** Welcome to the Work Joy Jam. I'm Beth, Stallwood your host and the founder of Create Work Joy. In this episode, I am joined by the wonderful Steven Watson and Steven is an expert in all things time management. And I know for sure that many of our listeners all struggling with this area with so many demands, so many different things to focus on, and it all seeming like quite a lot and never really having the time to do the things that you really, really wanted to do.

When I heard of Steven and saw his book Time Limited, I really wanted him to come on the port costs because I think it's one of those things that can really stifle the joy in your life. If you're struggling with your time and I'm thinking here, how can he help us to help ourselves to maybe approach our time management in a different way to help us to be able to feel like we have the influence over it that we want and are able to find the time to do the things we really, really want to do. I really enjoyed my conversation with Steven. I hope you enjoy it too. Here it is.

Hello, and welcome to the Work Joy Jam. In this episode, I'm really excited to be joined by Steven Watson. And when I connected with Steven, it was around his book launch, and I was like, we all on the Work Joy Jam need a little bit of what Steven is talking about, and I'm not going to tell you, cause I'm going to let him introduce himself and tell us a bit more about him, his work and what he does.

So Steven, over to you.

[00:02:14] **Steven Watson:** Hello? Hi Beth. So it's lovely to be here with you and I appreciate you inviting me onto your podcast. So, so my, my specialism is time management. I'm a teacher and a coach and I worked with lots of different people in lots of different settings. Really. I worked with business owners and people who are managing staff I work with people who are basically just trying to manage their life and fit everything in, in a world where everything runs at a hundred miles an hour. And there's so many things that people are so many things that are demanding of everybody's time. I just help people to get on top of that. And structure it all in a way that allows them to make the most of there time.

[00:03:03] **Beth Stallwood:** Amazing and everyone I'm sure can probably tell right now that that is exactly the reason I wanted you to come on here because this question of time management, I think for so many people I know for so many of our listeners is one of the biggest challenges that people are facing. There are so many things to do.

There are so many things at work to do, but also in life that trying to fit that in and make it happen and feel like you're doing a good job of stuff. is often one of the things that comes up as a, or I'm really struggling with this. So let's talk about this big subject of time management. And tell us a little



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bit about how you came to work on this and how your story helps you to help other people with this particular subject.

[00:03:52] **Steven Watson:** Yeah, sure. so I'm a, I say a teacher and a, a coach, and I've been working with. [00:04:00] lots of different types of people since 2004, I'd finished at university. I decided to take the plunge and start my own business. It was, it was kind of a, a no lose situation. If it all went wrong, then I would have kind of mortgage and family, kids, things like that to worry about particularly.

So I went for it then, and I was working six, sometimes seven days a week on my business, thinking that that was the way to make a business work. you know, it was very much of the opinion that if you work harder, you'll get better results. So I was enjoying my work. Don't get me wrong. I've always, always enjoyed that.

But the moment where I'm thinking really focused to book towards time management was, those let's say working six, seven days a week. And my mum was diagnosed with a terminal brain disease called progressive supranuclear palsy. And, I'd never heard of it before. Not many people have, it's quite a rare kind of condition, but, basically.

Uh, expectation from diagnosis is that you'll live around six years from diagnosis, but during that time you'll gradually deteriorate. And so, thinking of mom's experience, she, she lost her ability to balance first and so she was in a wheelchair and then lost her ability to, swallow, which meant that she couldn't eat or drink, she had to be fed through a tube. Her eyesight went amongst other things, she, she lost her ability to communicate. It's a horrible, horrible disease. and so we were given this, this prognosis and this information about this, this disease, this terrible disease that we we've been told mom, had got and I just thought, well, This is, this is crazy. Something's [00:06:00] got to change and working long days, long hours and the things that are most important to me, I'm not making time for, or not making enough time for, so I decided immediately to cut down my working week to four days so that I could spend at least one and sometimes two days of quality time with mom, take her out, really get to know her and spend some great time with her and make the most of the time that we had left together. And so I fully expected at that point that my business was going to suffer because I saw it. You can't just cut two days off your working week and expect everything to be okay. But, but I was willing to give it a go and to be honest, it wasn't the most important thing I thought, well, I'm a teacher.

I got it. I'll find a job if I need to. So I started looking at as many different time management strategies and tips and techniques that I could possibly lay my hands on. Some of them worked, some of them didn't, but over the time I gradually learned why they were working and why they weren't working and the way to get more out of it the time that you've got. So, thankfully I'm glad to say my business didn't just stay the same. It actually got a lot better and started performing even better than it did before. And I was working, you know, a third of the time. So people started asking me, how on earth are you doing that? Can you teach me how to do it?



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And so, uh, uh, that's what I'm doing. And that's how I ended up doing what I do now writing a book on time management called Time Limited, as you've you've mentioned before, and the most pleasing part of it all was, I got that quality time with mom. I got to know her better than I probably ever would have done if she'd had never been ill and now I still [00:08:00] use that time for family and things that are most important to me. So I've got a three year old little girl I spend, two full days a week and with her and, and, you know, doing, doing lovely things and going to swim in and taking her to gymnastics and just enjoying and all the things that disappear very quickly when, when you've got kids. So yeah, that's, that's how I got into it.

[00:08:27] **Beth Stallwood:** It's really interesting. And, you know, first of all, just, my heart goes out to you about that diagnosis and having to go through that situation with your mom. And there's also a thing here about the impetus of something so horrible happening and how it's really transformed, how you do things.

And sometimes we see these things we as just the bad bits, but what they can offer you as well. And I'm sitting here thinking that you probably never had any intention, but tell me, you know, probably never had any intention of becoming a person who teaches people, how to manage their time.

That wasn't, that your business to start with. I imagine.

[00:09:07] **Steven Watson:** No. It was, it was leaders really that I was working mostly with in a, in a business setting. I was working with a lot of accidental managers. So people who get promoted into a management position because they were good at what they did in their job, but then finding themselves and not doing any of the things that they were good at.

And now having this beast of a job that they don't know how to do. And time management was actually a big part of that as well. Yeah, you're right. It's I mean, it's terrible. A diagnosis like that. And. It's an awful thing. And you can say, oh, try and take the positives at the time. There just aren't any positives.

It's just a shell shock to your life it's awful, and it hits you like a train, but, I suppose there are some things that you can take from, from any given situation. Aren't they, and, and this, [00:10:00] I almost see as kind of a legacy to my mom because it's her that sat me on this path and it's become my focus.

[00:10:09] **Beth Stallwood:** That's a really lovely way of thinking about it. And even if you can't see that in the moment, because you are hit like a train and it's terrible, the learning from after the situation is a really interesting one. I love, that's really nice to think about it is that the legacy that you're taking and the legacy is passing down the generations.



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And now you use that time with your daughter and how fantastic that is, and I can imagine right now there are many people who are listening here going, hang on a minute. I've got young kids. I want to spend more time with my kids. I am so busy and stressed out and working so much and not focusing and not spending that precious time.

So here I'm going to get to it. We've obviously not got like time to go into. Uh, technique and things that you would work through, but can you tell us some of the high levels of it, maybe some of the basics and the foundational things that you think are really important for any of us who want to get better at managing our time to be able to focus on the important things in our lives?

[00:11:12] **Steven Watson:** Yeah, absolutely. and I'm conscious that there's a range of different people who have been listening to this, and some of them will be employed. Some of them will be self-employed. and I realize that not everything might fit for every individual, but hopefully there'll be one or two things. If you're employed, I think, having that positive line of communication with the people who are in a position to make those, those decisions about your working hours and your working days, I really good because I don't know. bosses who are not interested in being more productive and achieving goals quicker and having staff that are happier with a better balance and, [00:12:00] you know, there's nobody, no manager in the world wouldn't want those things, but it's about being able to, being able to show them that they can have those things. but with people who are working on their own, they're self directed, it's much easier to implement these things a lot quicker, of course.

But I suppose, when I first started. One of the first things I did as, as you do with everything, then when you want to know about something, I Googled it. I Google time management. Well get this Beth I googled time management and there was four and a half billion results came back and I thought.

There is no shortage of information about, uh, tips about time management. But I thought to myself, why are people still struggling with it when there's so much information out there about it? And, and this is what I meant. I said to you before that I, I started working out why some things work and why some things don't and there was two main things that, that I took from it. One of them was, about habits. So most of the things that you read about say that choices, decisions, and priorities are the keys to time mastery. And they'll say, if you want something enough, you'll do it, stuff like that. And I do agree with that to an extent, I think it's got its place and it is important, but what really, made me think was when it was pointed out to me that around half of the things that you do on a day-to-day basis are nothing to do with those conscious decisions and choices that habits, the things that you do routinely. so for instance, you'd probably get up at a similar time. You'd probably have the same relationship with your, with your alarm clock that you do every other day. If you're a snooze hit or you're a snooze hitter, or if you're not, you get up.

You'll have the same bathroom routine. I'm [00:14:00] pretty sure of that. You'll have probably the same thing for your breakfast. You maybe drive the same way to work. If you have to go out to work,



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you'll have the same routines and we have these moments in our days, you think about driving to work. For instance, it's quiet and you get in the car and you don't even remember the journey.

You just arrive at work. You do the same things as you always do when you arrive at work, it is crazy how Groundhog day it really is. So habits was the first thing. I started working out how you can develop habits and how you can attach desired actions that will really help you with time management to, uh, existing behaviours that you do naturally.

Anyway, so that just as naturally as when you go to the toilet, then you wash your hands. You'll be doing things that really help you. And I'd say more about that in a little bit, but the other parts that was the first bit about habits, the second part was about structure and people talk about time management in terms of symptoms.

So they'll say my email inbox is overflowing and I can't keep on top of it. Or I've got too many meetings. My meetings over run, or I procrastinate, or I get distracted or my social media or there's so many things that all symptoms and people jump about from things that things have been, and they never really, master any of them.

And, and I think from my work, I, I notice that there's key things that have to be in place before you can even think about the rest of it. So, I put it in a bit of a diagram called the pyramid of time mastery, and now it's what my culture and my, all my courses and my book and everything I do is based on this pyramid of time mastery and that says that there's five key blocks at the bottom of the pyramid [00:16:00] that you have to get in place if you want to master your time. And that's, those are the two things, really the, the structure – the structure and the habits.

[00:16:10] **Beth Stallwood:** Right. Can we dig into some of these things? Because I think it's pretty interesting to think about number one habits. They are the things that either make or break us and totally, totally in line with that. I love how you talk about tagging things on to have it. You already have, to make it easier I suppose, to build new habits and to try new things.

Can you give us some examples of how that might work in the real world?

[00:16:34] **Steven Watson:** Yeah, absolutely. I can add this some it's very easy for me to do that because I'd do it every day for myself. So I can just talk about my own. time habits. the, the process I'm talking about with attaching things is called one and then, so it's just, uh, when you first started out, you think when I do this, then I do that and it drills it into you that you do that. So, one of the domino effect time habits is scheduling time to schedule your time. So many people don't do it. They fly by the seat of their pants. and they just, you know, what happens happens, but the people who, who are successful with their time, don't do it by accident.



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They do it on purpose. They will sit there and they will, they will schedule time to actually have a look at their schedule and say, what are the most important things? The big rocks. If you ever see my analogy that I need to fit in. Things like my health, my fitness, my relationships, when are they going to fit?

They're the most important things in all of our lives. And if we neglect them, then it has a negative impact on everything else. So you've got to schedule those in first. and then after that you start thinking, right, what are the important tasks that I need to do? This [00:18:00] week for my work schedule them in, and then the rest of the time will always get taken up by all of the other stuff.

The sand in the demonstration. I know you've seen that the rocks, pebbles and sand analogy, but if you put the sand in first, it fills up all the week is the stuff that just turns up and you have to deal with it. It will fill up all the space that you allow it to, but put the big rocks in first, be really impulsive things.

Get your impulsive tasks in and then just let the sun half the rest of the space. So time to schedule your time is really important. for me, the when and then I'll, that is when I closed my laptop at the end of the day, then I have a look at my schedule and think about those things, but I have another one as well, which is that I do in the morning.

So when I wake up in the morning, one of the first things I do habitually is go downstairs and make a coffee. I put the, put the kettle on. So. So when I put the kettle on, then I think of Acme ACM. And that leads me onto a little bit of a story of how we got to that, because it probably doesn't mean anything to you at the moment. Do you remember Wylie Kayote

[00:19:15] **Beth Stallwood:** I do remember Wylie Kaytoe, and when you said acne, I was thinking of like him chucking stuff over the edge of like mountains and stuff.

[00:19:24] **Steven Watson:** Yeah, absolutely. And that's exactly what it is. I started thinking I watched it, I don't know. It just came on TV one day. I was looking at it and I was thinking, wow.

Yeah, this really it's a kid's card. So you're not, they're supposed to just be enjoyable. I get that. But I was looking at it. I was thinking, wow. Yeah. Why kind of, you never catch that Roadrunner because actually. he has some pretty good ideas. There was there's some of the things that he tried to do, which is like using free bird seed, and you think, yeah, that's that's viable, but that could work.

he also had loads of equipment, everything. [00:20:00] They always have ACME written on it. And they, it was all the rockets and the contraptions. He had all the resources that he could need books. He could never catch the Roadrunner. And when you look at every single one of his failures at his failed attempts, they were all avoidable and they were all things that he could have prevented if he; d have thought about that. So for instance, getting on the rocket that goes faster than the Road



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runner goes, but not knowing how to stop the rocket or doing something on the side of a cliff. We have that moment where he steps off the edge, and then there's a five second pause and he waves at the camera and then drops to his doom. Or the contraption that I was talking about with the birds, see, and he got his leg trapped in it, the poor thing, and it dragged it down and he ended up getting trapped. And the thing is that, but they were all avoidable. And I started thinking the answer to all of his problems was right in front of him.

The whole time is the word ACME. And if he had thoughts about ACME, he could have prevented a lot of those things. And we all do that on a daily basis. We all have the same mistakes. Maybe we don't fall off cliffs and climb on rockets, but we, we do make mistakes that we could avoid. And, as an acronym stands for, anticipate, So going back to my when, and then when I'm boiling the kettle and thinking about ACME, can I anticipate any problems that could arise with what I'm doing today? Yeah. So for instance, I'm a travel in a rush hour, a meetings, very close together, stuff like that. Can I anticipate problems? The C is confirm.

There's nothing worse than when you have a meeting with somebody or you arrange a meeting with somebody and then you turn up to it and they don't because they've forgotten or they've got the time wrong or whatever, multitude of reasons. It just helps. If you confirm it, you send someone a text message and just say really looking forward to [00:22:00] seeing you at 10, wherever, just confirms it. The M is move, a lazy example is if you've got a city center meeting and the first thing in the morning and another one last thing in the evening, can you move them? Can you move one of them to make them together and cut down on travel time? Or can you move both of them away from rush hour? If you can move things around that can, can really help you.

And the final one E is evaluate, evaluate the, the benefit of the outcome from this thing that you've got scheduled in and weigh it all up against the time that it's going to take you to achieve it. And if it's not worth the time that you put into it, then don't do it. if it is worth the time then great. There's another thing I could tell you about later about valuing your time, but that comes out later, that helps with the evaluation. But yeah, that's my example of taken a long while to go through it. I appreciate that, but...

[00:23:04] **Beth Stallwood:** There are so many things I really like one of the things that I know for sure is if I, when I'm, when I'm in the good habit and I often do this on like a Friday afternoon, and today's a Friday when we're recording this and it is in my diary to do it.

So. It, when I spend even just 45 minutes or an hour looking at my week ahead, knowing what I've got hunting, what I've got. It really settles my mind that it's going to be okay next week. So sometimes, you know, you get that, that kind of stress that's there, but doesn't need to be there. And the weeks where I don't do that, I find my weeks are more difficult and I can't manage my time.

And it's, it's only an investment of like 45 minutes just to look and understand. So I totally get the scheduling time to schedule time. It definitely makes a difference to me personally. So, and then I'm





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just sitting here listening to ACME one. And number one, I was thinking that's some deep thinking about the Roadrunner.[00:24:00] People often ask me because I do things like quote, quotes from TV shows and say, this is like really inspirational to me. And they go, Beth, why is Grey's Anatomy so inspirational? Like, no, it's not about Grey's anatomy. It's like the quote within it. It's amazing. And so I'm like, I was sitting there, giggling myself at somebody else who reads a lot of stuff into things that other people don't read things into.

And then the Acme stuff really, really interesting. And, Yeah, that anticipate and doing it, doing it while you have your coffee in the morning, or while you're at your breakfast or while you're brushing your teeth or whatever, thinking about what you have there and kind of that habit stacking thing.

Isn't it it's like saying while I'm doing this, if I add this on, that just becomes what I do and it's, people often think that this about doing extra work, if that extra time for thinking you're, you're just using time you're already using you already have you already got that time for having your coffee or whatever, and I'm loving that anticipate with a move and evaluate, and especially that last one, is it worth it?

Is it, is it something that it's worth spending that time on and being, and then that might sound quite brutal, but just being really cheesy, isn't it about how you spend your time and in your life to make the most of it.

[00:25:16] **Steven Watson:** Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. And it's, there's a, there's a few things on that with, with scheduling and, evaluation. The valuing your time thing I find this really useful. There's something on, I'll give you a link to the website it is completely free. It's just a little calculator on my website, but it values your time gives you an hourly rate and it takes into account, your desired income for the next year, it divides it between the number of weeks that you want to work in the year to achieve it.

And then it divides that by the number of hours per week that you want to work. it takes into account a bit of time by you'll be [00:26:00] working on non-income generating activities as well. So working on the business instead of in the business, that kind of thing. And it gives you an hourly rate. And let's say, for example, that comes out just for easy math that comes out of a hundred pounds as your hourly rate.

And then you can make a pretty good decision when you're evaluating about whether a 55 or 50 pounds task is worth your time and effect upon task. You'd say I'm not going to spend more than half an hour on this because it's just not, it doesn't fit with, with the value of my time. And if it's 200 pound task, then you can say, I can afford to spend a couple of hours on this.

[00:26:38] **Beth Stallwood:** Yeah. So actually really valuing what you're doing with your time and how much that's worth, if you know, if you're in a business, how much that's worth to the business.





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Yeah. That's a, yeah, it's a really interesting part of looking at it. Can we go back and look at this structure thing? Cause you started talking about pyramids and I have been on your website and looked at the pyramid, and I was like, Ooh, number one.

I like anything that comes in nice shapes. So you had me at pyramid. But you said here that there are five, like real foundations that if you don't have them in place, you're probably not going to get very far with your time mastery. Can you tell us what some of those things are so that we can think actually often I don't know about you, but often I think we try and aim for the top of the pyramid first and actually sometimes aiming for the basics and just working on those for a while sets you up in a really good place to be able to do better things in the future.

[00:27:31] **Steven Watson:** Yeah, absolutely. And I'll, I will actually start with the end in mind a little bit and say, because we all like to know where we're going with it.

Don't we the peak of the pyramid, the pinnacle of it is what I think everybody wants in one way or another, and that's freedom. He wants to be able to do what you want to do when you want to do it. And how you want to do it. That's freedom. Isn't it? That's what we all want with time mastery. I think, but tell me if I'm wrong, but...

[00:28:01] **Beth Stallwood:** I think people might describe it in a different way, but when you said they yet know freedom and relates to having the time to do the stuff that you want to do, and for you, that might be family.

So you're kind of really driven by that family time for other people it might be some kind of hobby that they have for other people. It could be something else. So, yeah, freedom to do the stuff that you want to do, kind of when you want to do it is. Yeah. I really liked that as a goal.

[00:28:24] **Steven Watson:** And I mean, it can be freedom. It can be more work and that's okay. If you want more time to do more work, that's great. Good for you. But whatever you want, whatever freedom means to you, that's the, the goal of working down on it. Yeah. There's all sorts of things like having the right balance, being productive, getting better, organized, being disciplined, having clarity, communication, and consistency, building the habits, having the strength to follow through with, with your plans and stuff like that.

But the base level, the foundations where all of these, all of the things we've just said will fall down. And if you don't have these things in place, from my experience is there's five blocks. The first one is why and you hear lots of people talking about that. Why? And you hear, my family and things like that.



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That's all great. It's all very, all very positive stuff. It's not exactly what I mean. And in the why that I'm talking about, it's just, why are you trying to be better with your time? What will it mean to you? Will it mean that you can do is it linked to freedom. What is freedom? Why, why do you want to do this?

Is it so that you can have more time with your family as it is so that you can earn more money or, or something else being really clear about why you're trying to be better with your time will keep you focused. And in times of adversity, which you're going to face every day, because there's so many distractions out there. So yeah. Why is the first one? The second block is self-awareness. And it's knowing [00:30:00] what you're good at and what you're not good at with time management. So when you're aware of that, you can, you can know the things that are likely to, to distract you and you can know the, the things that are likely to set you back a bit like what we were talking about before in the anticipation with ACME, you know, you can, you can anticipate things better if you know what your weaknesses are.

[00:30:25] **Beth Stallwood:** So I'm thinking here, like total confession time, because people like it. When we, we kind of talk about the things that we're not so good at as well.

So what am I good at time management wise? I'm good. When I've got a lot to do. I'm good. When I've got clients who need things and they need things by a deadline. I am totally terrible, when I don't have a deadline enforced by somebody else. And if I have a whole day to do something, just the procrastination that sets in, if there's a whole day to do something, and I like in time management terms, I need that whole day to do it in the hours that I have.

But if I have a whole day without anything else to do getting going for me is really hard. And the deadline thing, if I've set myself a deadline. It's like, it's the most flexible thing in the world. If a client set a deadline, it'll be done before the deadline there. So there's that I get it. And it's taken me a while to understand those things.

And now that I know them, I can do that. Okay. Let's really evaluate what's going on here stuff and, and, and I suppose the other thing there is for me when I'm looking at that is if I know that I can plan my time better.

[00:31:41] **Steven Watson:** Dipping into lots of different things there as well with, uh, with the procrastination thing, which is about getting mad about procrastination. It's about knowing your motivation, which is coming back to your why. And then having those mini deadlines. The students [00:32:00] do it all the time they're going a three month deadline. They wait two and a half months. Then they think about it. Then they do it the day before it's due. And it's all because of that deadline that was broken down into many deadlines and milestones. It's so much more effective. And the third part of that, the middle part, I guess, is the, is accountability.



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You've got to have somebody who's holding you accountable to actually doing it - that can be family if it's a personal commitment that you're trying to achieve, or it could be a work colleague or a customer, you've got to have those three things. But yeah. So me being aware of it is massive. I also have a thing on my, again, on the, on the website is, and it's free again.

I'm not flogging anything here. It is all free, but there's a thing called the multitask and mastery of time task. That is a series of questions takes you about five minutes to do it, but it sends you in instant PDF report of all of your strengths and weaknesses and time management which is pretty cool. So if everybody wants to have a go at that, then please do

[00:33:03] **Beth Stallwood:** Brilliant. We'll put the link in the show notes that people can go to.

[00:33:07] **Steven Watson:** Yeah. Cool. Thanks. So, so yeah, so, so first two blocks are Why and Awareness. The next one is Vision. So having a real clear vision of what does that freedom look like? So you know why you're going for it, but what does it look like if you talk about it as if you've already achieved it?

So I now spend, uh, two days per week, doing whatever they, whatever it is that you want to do, or I now have, I'll go for a run three times a week, every week from all the know, you know what I mean? You talk as if you're already doing it, that's the vision. It links very nicely with the next block along, which is planning, which is exactly what we've just spoken about, Beth, which is, breaking it down into milestones and saying, if my vision is that in 12 months, I'm going to be [00:34:00] doing this then if I'm on track at nine months, what does that look like? And then having that, and then say, if I'm going to be there at nine months, where do I need to be at six months? If I'm going to be there at six months, when I have to be at 3, 3, 1 month, if I'm gonna be there in a month, where do I have to be next today?

[00:34:23] **Beth Stallwood:** It's like project managing your approach to this time. Isn't it like going, actually, this is now a project I am really focused on making this happen. And I'm always in there thinking that, you know, you talked about that, you know, if you want to have this many days to do this, but also you could focus on something small.

It could, you could say, I want to spend an hour focus time with my kids every day, or I want to spend an hour. Once a week doing a hobby or something, I've never managed to actually get the habit to fit in that it doesn't have to be a huge thing. It could be something quite small, but actually planning it and working out we'll help you get.

[00:34:58] **Steven Watson:** Yeah, definitely. And I think the things like that work, more effectively, I think when, when it's not things that you have, it's things that you are doing and processes and things that you are because those habits will and will pay dividends or they'll move on and, and keep giving you the kind of life that you're looking for.



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[00:35:23] **Beth Stallwood:** And I suppose if you do the small stuff, prove to yourself that you can do this, that you can make the time to do the stuff that you want to do. So there's that, that little bit of momentum in your motivation that hang on, I feel I managed to carve out an hour to do this. I could carve out another hour to do something else I really want. Because I know the process now I've got confident with how I make that happen and I've built it as a habit, so it's going to happen now anyway. So what else could I do and how could I kind of stack that up?

[00:35:51] **Steven Watson:** Yeah, definitely. Definitely. It is sort of domino effect. Once you start doing things that help you with your time [00:36:00] management, then it becomes easier to do all the things.

That help you. And before, you know, it, it's actually really easy, you know, to, to cut chunks off your week. If you set your mind to it, it's quite, it's very, very achievable to free up time. The problem is, and this links me into the, the final block on the, on the foundation layer is that a lot of it is to do with mindset. That's the fifth block on the, on the bottom line. And, people always want more, more, more, more, more money, more time. That's what everybody wants. But if the thing is with having more of anything, is that it only serves to exaggerate, the relationship that you've already got with it. So if you, if you waste money than having more money, probably isn't the answer because you'll just waste more money.

if you. If you waste time, if you procrastinate, if you spend time in the wrong areas, doing the wrong kinds of things, having more time, isn't the solution because you'll just do more of the wrong things and waste even more and procrastinate even more. It's more about, instead of wanting more. You need to make more of the things that you've got.

And, I mean, there's so much stuff going on in the world at the moment where you don't need me to tell you that, but then that we've been through in the last 18 months and, and all the challenges, and I'm not belittling that for a second. I'm not, there's lots of things that we can't control that have happened and challenges that have been there. But alongside that. And even before, everything that's been going on since, since time began, there's always been excuses from people of why they're not going to do things. how you can say, I'm not going to do this because today's day ends in a Y or whatever you want to just, you can make excuses for anything.

And the mindset shift is saying, I'm not going to try and control everything. [00:38:00] But I am going to try and shift from excuses to responsibility in the things that are within my circle of influence. So if I, for instance, if it's chucking it down as rain and it's horrible weather outside is gray it's windy.

It's cold, there's not a lot you can do about that, but you can influence your mindset and you can say, do you know what I'm going to put my coat on. I'm going to get my umbrella up. I'm going to put my boots on and I'm going to make the best of this. And I'm going to get out and do what I do. With what I can influence.



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[00:38:34] **Beth Stallwood:** Yeah. And it's interesting that the weather analogy, cause I always think it's not the weather. That's the problem. That's your outfit.

I, you know, being, I know that you've got a dog as well. I thought a dog Walker is that you have to go for a dog walk, whatever the weather is. And sometimes like I did the other day, you ended up totally soaked because you've worn the wrong thing, but that's not the weather's fault. That's you're not taking responsibility or planning what you should actually wear when you look out the window.

[00:39:00] **Steven Watson:** Yeah, definitely.

[00:39:02] **Beth Stallwood:** And I think they said, there's this great phrase, and I don't know if you use it, but I've heard it many, many times before is we often, and it often happens when people are in the workplace, people say, well, I haven't got time to do that. And if you change that to, it's not a priority and then check yourself against that.

You can make time to make anything happen, right. Is it's if you, if you start with that mindset that you can find the time to do the important stuff. If you say this isn't a priority. And then check yourself because if it is, you're probably doing something that isn't a priority and you need to swap your time over and do something else.

So that, I think really, that really helps me when I'm thinking about, have I got enough time to do something? Is actually, is this a priority?

[00:39:42] **Steven Watson:** And when you've got people directing things to you and saying what, what they want you to do, that can be a challenge. But I always like to think of, yes but, as a response.

So you can say, can you do this for me? Yes. Board. How would you like me to prioritize that against this sort of thing that you've already [00:40:00] asked me to do?

[00:40:02] **Beth Stallwood:** And that also then comes back to your good point about kind of shuttling time to schedule time is if you don't know what's on your agenda, what's on your list.

What you've got to do, it's very hard in that moment. If your boss comes over and says, can I add this to you? And it's got a really urgent deadline to say, yes, I can which one of these other three things can move down the priority list and be done next week. Because if you don't know, you probably just end up taking on and then taking it on and then taking it on and then feeling like everything is overflowing.



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[00:40:30] **Steven Watson:** Yeah, a good, a good time habit. Another one that I use and I would suggest that other people do is, when you are asked to make a commitment, then always delay it. Never make a commitment there. And then, so why customers might ask you, when can you have this done by and you think you really want to impress them and you, you want to come across really well.

So you say, can you do it by the end of the day? And you go, yeah, of course I can. And then you leave the meeting. Oh, my word. Why did I say I could do that? I can't do that by the end of the day. And then you're stressed and you're over scheduled make mistakes and all the rest of it. So, the response I like to give is, the last thing I want to do is say to you that I'll definitely do it by the end of the day and then not be able to do it.

So if it's okay with you, I'll go and have a look at my calendar and then I'll confirm it. It just gives you that bit of time to think logically instead of in the heat of the moment.

[00:41:26] **Beth Stallwood:** Yeah. And it's funny, isn't it? Because we always think that other people have these massively high expectations of when these things can be done by, and I've done that before, you know, as a business owner and maybe it's slightly different in the working context, but as a business owner, where you go, oh yeah, yeah, I'll do it for you tomorrow.

And then someone goes to me, oh, I'm I'm away. So I'm not going to look at it until next week anyway. And you're like, oh, why did I offer to do it short amount of time? If you say, if you say things like. The end of next week, be okay for you or do you, is there a reason you need it sooner than that? Most people will go.

Yeah, that's fine. It's all right. It was managing our own expectations of what we do versus [00:42:00] necessarily the other people. And sometimes of course, there's going to be clients or there's going to be bosses. There's going to be things that it's got to happen today. And then it's the choice of, okay. So what gives.

[00:42:09] **Steven Watson:** Yeah. Yeah. Well, there's loads of stuff we can do. I mean, emails is, is the bane of a lot of people's lives. You end up with loads of emails in the inbox, they get an email and think it'll take me about 20 minutes to deal with that, but I don't have 20 minutes now, so they leave it and then they got another one.

This will take them 15 minutes, but they're off 15 minutes now. So they'll leave it. And before they know it, they've got an inbox full of tasks and things that they need to do the scrolling up and down them thinking, what do I need to do? I'm drowning here. And then they miss things and there's big problems from it, but a little tip that, that lots of people don't know, but if you don't know it and you implement it, it will be a massive help to you is that you can drag and drop emails in most things like outlook and Gmail and stuff. You can drag and drop emails over your calendar. And if you do that,



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then it will open up, uh, an entry in your calendar where you can find a space where you've got 20 minutes to be able to do that. And it takes it out of your inbox. But it's in your calendar. I'll give you a reminder at a time that you're free to do it.

Find it has got the link to the email, everything else, and you've not done it, but it's in hand and you've dealt with it. So that's, that's massive. And I think the other thing as well is the one thing that people are rubbish in general is estimating how much time things are going to take. So they, because you, you think of things as how long it should take in an ideal world.

And, uh, so let's say you got something that should take you about 10 minutes to do normally you'll, uh, lots of people's schedule 10 minutes for it. I think that should be fine, but stuff always happens. The doorbell goes, the cat's sick on the floor. You know, the babies cry, whatever it is, there's always going to be something somebody will call [00:44:00] you.

They'll always be something that comes up. So I always advocate to people that, to account for that when you – it's the when and then - when you were estimated how long something will take than always add VAT - valuable additional time. And your rate of VAT can be whatever you want it to be. It could be 10%, It could be 20%, but the principle behind it is that if you think something should take you 10 minutes, give 15 for it. And just, there's only two outcomes that can come from that. One of them is that you do it in the time that you should have done it and you've now freed up some time, which is lovely.

And the other way is that something does come up, the phone rings, you take a phone call, you get back to it. You still get stuff that you needed to do. and yeah, so there's loads of habits that if you can implement them into your life, it can really help you. One of the key ways to develop habits and because that's, the tricky bit is, is putting these, these habits in place is by streaking.

And a lot of people raise their eyebrows when I start saying the streaking. What I mean is just doing something for as many days as you can, in a row without breaking the chain. Yeah. how long does it take to build a habit? 21 days, 60 days, a hundred, who knows? It depends on the habit.

It depends on you. If you do it enough times in a row, it will become a habit eventually. So, yeah. And why does streaking work? Because when you get in that tick every day and you know, you're on a, I don't know, a 64 day run, 56 day streak. It's a lot to lose by not doing it so it makes you do it because you don't want to lose your streak.

[00:45:54] **Beth Stallwood:** And then you really want to do it because you're feeling the benefit of it. And, and then it just eventually just becomes something you do [00:46:00] without even thinking about it. You just have to put, you almost have to formalize it before it becomes the informal habit that you just know. There are so many things that I can.





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We could carry on talking about. However, and I w what I would say is thank you for it. We'll put all the links to the websites that people can go in and look at the staff, linked to your book, et cetera, because there are so many things here that I think if people could implement them, they would really help them in their world to feel great and be able to get some joy from their work and be able to get some joy in their life because they've made time to do the things that are important to them, whether that's work or life or a combination of both of those things, but for now, are you okay if we move on to some quick fire questions?

Right. My first question for you is for you personally, what is always guaranteed to bring you a bit of work joy.

[00:46:53] **Steven Watson:** I think it's progress is the most motivational thing, whatever you do. And if you can feel like you're making progress towards your vision and you, the goal of yours and all they want, then that brings you a lot of joy, I think. And a lot of motivation.

[00:47:08] **Beth Stallwood:** Thank you. Uh, what book are you currently reading?

[00:47:12] **Steven Watson:** Oh, a few that I've been looking at that. I tried to do something a bit different with the last one. I usually tend to gravitate towards the same types of books. but I was trying not to do that, to try and broaden my kind of reading a little bit. So the last one that I was looking at was actually Matthew McConaughey's book called Greenlights.

I really enjoyed it. I thought it was good. And I actually. I don't know why you stand on the whole, uh, paperback versus audio book, kind of position. But this one, I would certainly recommend that you do on audio book because his voice, he reads it. His voice is incredible. He's so engaging.

[00:48:00] and yeah, I really enjoyed that.

[00:48:02] **Beth Stallwood:** I have to say, I love an audio book and I love a paperback. I'd have both of those things. I don't do E readers. That's not my thing. I have to have like actually physical media in that world. But sometimes if I really enjoy a book and I've read it, I'll listen to it. And vice versa because I, I don't know about you, but I get different things from it and listening to reading and you notice different bits.

So yeah, I might have to have a little look of that one. I have had, it mentioned a few times, so. Yeah. Great. Thank you. What is the best or most useful bit of advice that someone has given you in your life that you always find yourself coming back to.

[00:48:39] **Steven Watson:** I think it's, it's about, not, not limiting yourself to what, so of what you can achieve.



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So there's, there's actually, something that was in the Matthew McConaughey book. So, you know, there's something that has come, come up a few times where people say rooves are man made structures and they're, they make you believe that you could only get to a certain level and then you start feeling nervous if you can get towards it and you can getting higher.

Why half that, why have that kind of artificial ceiling on what you can achieve? It's that mindset thing, isn't it don't think that you can't. But some of the people say, oh, you can chop chunks off your week. There'll be some people that roll their eyes and go, yeah, whatever you can't do that. I couldn't do this because that's because that, because the other, why are you limiting yourself like that? You know, give yourself every opportunity to achieve the things that you really want.

[00:49:42] **Beth Stallwood:** Yeah, really, really great one. Thank you. So what is one super practical bit of advice to our listeners? That something that they could really easily go and do today, tomorrow the next day? What would it be and why would you pick that?

[00:49:57] **Steven Watson:** Okay. there's a few. Which ones shall I go for? I'm going to say. and we would go back to emails as a thing, and I'm going to say lots of people have their emails open on the screen and it's just ready to distract you. You're setting yourself up to fail if you've done that. And they do it. The reason they do it is because they know that if they get, they don't want to miss an email and they don't want to miss a phone call.

So set up automated things that allow you to take time away from that. So, what do you mean by that? I mean, on email, you can ask that an auto reply that says, in the interest of time management, I check my emails every few hours. If, it's urgent, please give me a call on this number. And if you set your voicemail, to something like, you know, I'm sorry, I can't see you at the moment, but I will call you back as soon as I can.

If it's urgent, please call this. Then you not that. About not seeing an email as soon as it comes in and not answering a phone call first time. It's interesting. Actually, the first I did a bit of research into this with especially the not answering phone calls. People say don't answer calls from numbers that you don't know.

I would say don't answer cold calls from numbers that you do know that apart from apart from a few, like the nursery calls, then obviously I'm going to answer that because if it's one of your friends or somebody. Uh, you know, just let it go to voicemail because what, what I found from my, from my time doing this was that when you let it go to voicemail, you can pick up the message and check, it's nothing that is actually urgent.

Most of the time. It's not, you've given them the option. If it was urgent to, you know, to call you on an office number or whatever, plus, you know, if somebody rings you six times in a [00:52:00] row



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within about two minutes, you'd think that yeah, you need to speak to them. but when people ring you, if you let it go and call them back in an hour, it's not unreasonable.

If you're in a meeting and you'd call back in an hour. So call them back in an hour, 70% of the time, they didn't need me anymore. It was something that they sorted themselves. They're like, oh, I was just wondering this, but I found that. Great. No problem. And you can cut out a lot of the sand, a lot of the stuff that you don't want to be dealing with those just noise in your day by not answering the phone.

[00:52:35] **Beth Stallwood:** Yeah, I think, I think as well, the, the neuroscience looking at the, like the ping of the email and the kind of destruction of notifications and stuff, and yeah. That I think it's something like, and don't quote me on this. There's something like it takes 22 minutes to get your brain back into the zone.

After you've got to look at an email, it's like, why would you waste 22 minutes? That's not, that's not a good use of time. Is it? It's just, it's a total waste of time to do it in that zone. So I love the idea of, you know, having that auto response and you're right. If you were in a meeting, you wouldn't be picking up your phone.

So why is your time less valuable when you're not in a meeting than it is when you are in a meeting? So again, if you come back to that, understanding your time, that's a really, really great thing to consider.

[00:53:19] **Steven Watson:** And nobody knows if it's a, if you're at a meet it or not do that. But the funny thing, about that stat by the way I heard that as well, but I'm not going to quote you on it, but it's 22 minutes. But the other parts of that stat as well is, is mind boggling. And that is that in an office environment, that people on average get distracted every 11 minutes. So if you got distracted every 11 minutes and it takes you 22 minutes to get back into what you were doing, then you never going to do it.

[00:53:47] **Beth Stallwood:** So you'll be distracted again before you actually get your brain back in. And now I'm like, oh, that's horrible. Need to sort that out. so yeah, I love [00:54:00] that. All the ideas things you can do with emails and voicemails and, you know, picking up the phone, not picking up the phone, when to do all that brilliant.

Where can people find out more about you? I mean, you suggest this stuff on the website, what's your website, where can people follow you and how can they buy your book? That kind of information would be amazing.

[00:54:20] **Steven Watson:** The valuing your time calculator, the MLT test, details about the book are all on my website, which is [www.27underhalf.co.uk](http://www.27underhalf.co.uk).



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And social media wise, LinkedIn is the platform I use the most. You can find me on there as Steven Watson.

[00:54:47] **Beth Stallwood:** Brilliant. Thank you so much. We'll put that link into the show notes that people can kind of click straight through and find out more about you.

It's been so fascinating and I definitely would want to spend another few hours taking everything out of your brain and put it into my brain because I can go and be better with my time. But thank you so much for coming on or for being a guest on the Work Joy Jam.

[00:55:09] **Steven Watson:** It's been a pleasure.

[00:55:14] **Beth Stallwood:** Thank you for listening to this episode of the Work Joy Jam with Steven Watson, what a great guest and some really amazing practical things that we can all think about doing, focusing on building our habits, to be better with our time so that we can find that freedom to do more of more things we want to do where we want to do them. Love it. I mean, so many great things about the habits that we have that, and I really loved those five foundational things that we can all think about when we're approaching, getting better at time management and thinking about how can we get those in place for ourselves, with the habits I love the when and then, so that when I am having my morning coffee, then I think. When I am doing this, I make sure I, [00:56:00] and that habit stacking, I think can be a really powerful thing for us all and creating new habits that are more helpful to us. And it's one thing we actually work on the Work Joy Way coaching program is what habits do we have, which ones are helpful and which ones are hindering us and how do we work with those ones that are helpful to. Maximize what they're doing and to build new ones, I will say, seeing this is really interesting about how do you value your time. And as he said, he's got his little calculator on the website. They go have a look at that. And the ACME, the anticipating, the confirming, the moving and the evaluating of what you are doing with your time.

Some really interesting things that so many, I couldn't just pick out one. And I think it's one of those things that we can all do with a little help with. I don't think I know anybody who thinks they've got time management totally nailed. So hopefully some things that you can take away and to action.

I'd love you to comment, to tell us what those actions were for you. Do you go and have a lesson to our other episodes? This season three, we have season one and season two. So there's plenty of things to listen to from all different perspectives about some things you can do to set yourself up for joy and to get more joy into your working life.

We also have Club Work Joy, our membership program, where we have amazing speakers and incredible community. We do networking or with people who are trying to cultivate more joy in their work from many different organizations, different industries, different roles, and that community with perspective is such a great place to be.



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