

NAME

2023-07-05 Pit Stop Picnic.mp3

DATE

July 11, 2023

DURATION

1h 6s

4 SPEAKERS

Karen Commins
Anne Flosnik
Laura English
Andrea Aal

START OF TRANSCRIPT

[00:00:03] Karen Commins

So I do want to welcome everyone to the Pit Stop. It's your fortnightly mid-week rest area to refuel your drive. I'm Karen Commins. I'm an audiobook narrator and I'm the chief cartographer for NarratorsRoadmap.com. And I'm your host for Pit Stop. With me in the copilot seat is my lovely friend, an award winning audiobook narrator Anne Flosnik who hosts the Narrator Uplift show here on clubhouse. Every other Wednesday, we usually talk with other audiobook narrators who have one or more side hustles, and they pull into the Pit Stop. But this week we're doing something a little different. It's a holiday week, and so I decided we'll have another picnic. We had one in the spring that went really well. So this conversation is being recorded. You'll be able to relisten or catch parts you missed, and this is definitely an audience participation chat! We want you to be part of the conversation. So, you know, write things in the chat or raise your hand if you've got a topic you want to explore. And we'll just get started with our picnic. It looks like you're back, Anne, and I'm glad you we didn't lose you!

[00:01:17] Anne Flosnik

But poor Mike is holed up somewhere with some kind of a sticking clutch or, I don't know, whatever. We'll sort that out later on.

[00:01:24] Karen Commins

Oh, well, I mean, obviously, if you need to.

[00:01:27] Anne Flosnik

No, no, no, no, no, no.

[00:01:28] Anne Flosnik

I'm here for the ride. I'm here for the ride.

[00:01:30] Karen Commins

And obviously always take that call because you never know. So, yeah.

[00:01:35] Anne Flosnik

I took it. All right.

[00:01:37] Karen Commins

But you were at .. You were at your movie premiere in March when we had our other picnic. And so this is your first time at a Pit Stop picnic.

[00:01:48] Anne Flosnik

Yes! I wasn't going to miss it. No matter what. Family crises be damned!

[00:01:56] Karen Commins

So. You know, I'm hoping the audience has topics they want to talk about. And if you've got questions of either of us or things you want to comment on or just want to say, hi, we'd love to hear from you. So raise your hand. I was telling Anne before we were getting started that I was having trouble with Twitter because TweetDeck is a thing that allows you to schedule tweets in advance. And I don't know if it started yet, but they are going to start charging you for that privilege. I've been on Twitter since 2008 and I haven't paid for that yet and I'm not planning to. So so because I didn't have TweetDeck, I was trying to send out my tweet manually and, you know, as we were getting started and. A social media is. Very helpful in a lot of ways, but in a lot of ways it is such an aggravation. Mean clubhouse we've all seen has changed how they've been doing things. And just when you think you have something learned or down, it changes. So that was my afternoon aggravation.

[00:03:13] Anne Flosnik

So what about a triumph?

[00:03:16] Karen Commins

You know, that would be great if I had one to share. Maybe you have a triumph.

[00:03:24] Anne Flosnik

I can't think. I honestly can't think of one. What about somebody else? Maybe somebody in the audience got a triumph or. Yeah. Back or something.

[00:03:33] Karen Commins

We'd love to share some triumphs. Yeah. Today was finding it really hard to get started with a project because and you know that I have been wanting to create an Evernote course for literally years and I've promised people I'm going to do it. I'm going to put it on the narrator's roadmap. And I have it all outlined. It's just hard to actually start. And so today I found myself I had planned to work on it and I found myself instead cleaning up my computer desktop where I had dragged things temporarily. But now, you know, it's just a whole bunch of documents that are in my way. And I know clutter is bad for productivity because you see the clutter, whether it's physical clutter or digital clutter, you see it and you think, Oh, I need to do something with that. I need to do something with that before I can possibly work on this career goal, this project that I've got in front of me.

[00:04:42] Karen Commins

Because.

[00:04:43] Karen Commins

But it does help if you can. Straighten things up because it. For me. It you know, I don't know if it loosens something up, but I realize, okay, that is that's taken care of. That's not anything I have to deal with at the moment. I can put all my focus on this project does that. The do you have problems with that too, or do you have a different thing to try?

[00:05:12] Anne Flosnik

I have the exact same thing kind of in that if I'm reading it right, What you're really saying, it's just a kind of a procrastination thing, even though it's a positive thing, it's the tidying up is a great thing and you're very happy when you've got it finished, but it's procrastinating from getting direct to your main goal. Yeah, and I do that different guises of that. Probably nothing as productive and creative as that, but it's not as if I'm sitting thinking about, Oh, I should or I should. I'm doing I'm all the time doing, but it's just am I doing what is the most needful thing? No, I'm not. So I can identify on, on a practical level with that. I second that emotion. In other words.

[00:05:58] Karen Commins

Yeah. Well, do you have something some failsafe that you do when you can't get started? Some trick that seems to kind of turn the key for you?

[00:06:11] Anne Flosnik

I don't know, Karen, but I have a very strong inner clock that usually saves the day for me, which is two weeks ahead of anything. Do you know what I mean? It's. It's a clock, that is. I put far more value on time than than time itself. You know, I give myself so much time wherever and I'm always looking to get more time. And if I can extend a deadline, whatever, you know, or set it long, long, long in the first place, I do. And I don't tend to sit on things. But then there is, you know, what we're discussing there is this. So I just kind of allow for my nature, if you will. Mhm. Um, and get there in plenty of time. So I can't say, but it's just it does take a toll, this procrastination inside because it's like you're constantly at war. I am constantly at war within myself to, to get the thing done and it's always the most important thing becomes the last thing. So I would write ten emails before I write the one that I really need to write or, you know, that kind of behavior, I don't know.

[00:07:15] Karen Commins

But but, you know, when it's other people's deadlines, I don't have any problem. I don't miss anybody's deadlines. I will meet or beat. That's what I want to do is beat the deadline. I'm not going to wait till the last minute to turn something in. I want to be ahead of that, you know, at least a day and earlier if I can manage it. So, you know, other people's deadlines don't give me the same problem as my own internal self-imposed projects. And so much of what I do is self-imposed. It's, you know, like everything I'm creating for the site, that's nobody's telling me to do it. But but I'm doing it. And so. This course is a bigger thing. And just starting it. I mean, it's just.

[00:08:08] Anne Flosnik

No, I can understand because it's like starting a book is that it's almost painful to start one because once you start putting it into creation, there it is, You know, and that's a it's kind of a frightening thing and it's fine once it's all growing along, you know, because the die is cast, it's that it's making the start. And so sometimes with another friend said, just do the opening and the conclusion, you know, the intro and the outro, just even getting that down for a book because that's just, say, a book that's different than your course. But even, you know, doing some little small thing that doesn't commit you to the character of what it is that you are going to be creating.

[00:08:56] Karen Commins

Well, it's even though it's different, it's kind of the same. And, you know, Barbara Sher wrote about this that she talked about the resistance that you have. And this is also a topic of [Steven Pressfield's book of *The War of Art*](#), how the resistance to what you want to do, your stated goal stands firmly in front of you and will push you away from it. And so Barbara Sher wrote about exactly what you're saying, like, do the least little increment of what it is that you're trying to get to. Like if you can only do five minutes, do those five minutes, because then, you know, it's like I feel like it's like taking a chisel and breaking away at the ice or the marble. It's resistance. Yeah.

[00:09:48] Anne Flosnik

Yeah, it's fear. For me, it's a fear that I'm going to not make the best thing that I possibly can. And the best thing that I possibly can doesn't exist anyway. That's just something in my mind, you know? But you want to do your best work, and so you want I like to be in my best frame of mind and the best this and the best that and the best cup of tea and the whole, you know, um, it's just the fear of starting, making that first move. But then like, Nike or whatever it is says, just do it, you know? I mean, that's the only antidote to it is just to. Put you know, do that first five minutes. Right. The first bit, whatever the thing just you have to take action.

[00:10:28] Karen Commins

Yeah. And I think with my problem of the course, you know, I'm thinking about I need to start with module one, but maybe it would be easier to start with something different, like because I have it all outlined and I know where I want to go. But. It's that opening and it you know what you're saying about the fear of not doing it the best way. I feel like that's probably true. Of this situation with me. And so maybe if I, instead of starting with that opening, starting start in the middle somewhere, like how do you get information into Evernote? And there's several ways you can type it. You can email it. Um, you know, maybe I start with something like that where it's, it's a very definite do this or do this or do this where the opening setting it up is less definite.

[00:11:27] Anne Flosnik

Yes, it's a characterization. The opening is a characterization of what will be, you know, moving forward. And the practical steps is something that's factual. So that is easier. There's no attachment to that. That's just you have facts to share and you know how to set them down. And even in the doing of that, I think, Karen, that makes the opening easier because now it already has something. There's something there.

[00:11:54] Karen Commins

Yeah. I think so. And I had done somebody had asked something not long ago and I had made a quick video. In that. When I say quick video, I didn't nothing is ever really quick. But but for me when I make a video I'll. I'll say the steps as I'm making it, but then I actually write out the script properly from what I said and come in the booth and record it so that it has very clear, wonderful audio. It's not picking up all the extraneous noises. This doesn't have my clock's ticking or my music playing, you know, So but so I did make one the other day, though, where I didn't do all that. I just. Just made a video as I'm sitting here speaking and this is what I do. Just to show like it was just one tiny little part. And. It's like I couldn't even do that today. I couldn't even do the quick and dirty version that I'm going to make look pretty and sound nice.

[00:13:06] Anne Flosnik

Some days there's just days like that. And then it's best not to fight that if, you know, if time is on your side and it is in this case, then move on to something else until inspiration strikes.

[00:13:18] Karen Commins

Well, and the other thing I do is I'll. Do something that's a quick hit. Like if somebody asked me a question, I can answer that. And so I'll do that rather than the thing that is before me that means so much to me that I want to do. I intend to do. I've promised people I'm doing, but it's hard. So I take it, you know, I take the easy road and and and I help somebody. And that's great. I love helping people, but. I do recognize that sometimes I will do that in place of doing the harder work that only I can do.

[00:14:04] Anne Flosnik

I understand it. I'm the same in different ways.

[00:14:09] Karen Commins

So our picnic is becoming "Karen's confessional"!

[00:14:14] Anne Flosnik

But you are not alone. You're not alone. But what about anybody else? Any ideas out there about anything? Anybody? Any?

[00:14:22] Karen Commins

Laura English has got her hand raised, so we'll send the mic to her and come on up. Laura. Yeah. And you'll have to unmute. There you go.

[00:14:33] Laura English

Hey, don't know if you can hear me. Can you. Can you guys hear me?

[00:14:37] Anne Flosnik

Yes. Perfect.

[00:14:38] Karen Commins

Great.

[00:14:39] Laura English

So I'm just laughing at everything you're saying because it's so me. I cannot work with clutter. It's not happening. And I don't it could be an excuse, but really, it's just I have to have everything sort of in order before I can focus on my work. But what I really wanted to say is something everyone's probably heard of before. When I have a really large project, I cannot look at the whole picture. I have to take a portion of it and instead of on my to do list saying, you know, write business plan, I'm going to say write chapter one of whatever or section one of the plan, and that'll be my job for the week. And what I find is if I just say that that's what I'm want to do and I get started, just like you all were saying, once you get started, you kind of just get sucked in. And I always get more done than I committed to in the beginning of the week, if that makes sense. Yes. So, Karen, with your, um, project, just don't look at the whole thing, man. Take a piece of it and just say, I'm going to conquer this this week, and I guarantee you'll do more than that section in one week.

[00:15:48] Karen Commins

That is really great advice. And it's so funny because I was looking at my course outline and of course there's bullets, there's the topic and then there's all the bullets. And I was reading through some of these things, trying to figure out how do I. Open this. What do I want to say at the beginning? And so I think starting in the middle and then just going with what you said of just pick pick the one thing in the middle and start with that and stop looking at the rest of the outline. That sounds like that could be a winner. This course may happen sooner than we think. Well, I really appreciate that. Laura. Do you have other. Words of wisdom or any other topics perhaps you would like to discuss?

[00:16:40] Laura English

No, no, I just. I just. This was near and dear to my heart, so I was like, I struggle with it. And that's just how I deal with it. And I love that. You said you had to clean up your clutter because I am the same way I will do. I will do anything besides work if there's a mess anywhere in my house. Oh, wow. God, I.

[00:16:58] Anne Flosnik

Wish I had that. Oh.

[00:17:01] Karen Commins

Well, you know, we Drew and I watched the Hoarders show, and he asked me why I like this show so much. Because these people I don't know if you all have seen this show, but they live. They they pile stuff so high in their house, they have like a little goat path through their house and usually, like their kitchen doesn't work, their bathroom doesn't work, and they're having to climb over things like they're a mountain goat. It's really incredible. And you think, how could people live this way? And I'm not reveling in people's bad fortune or their misery to see them living this way. Why I like the show is they'll do a time lapse of the cleanup. And so you see it going from chaos to organization, you know, pretty fast. Plus, they're working through with people, you know, why are you holding on to this? It's just a box. What good is this to you? Why keep this? It's trash. And so any time Drew and I start thinking, well, maybe I might want this for something sometime we both like. No, no, no. That's hoarder mentality. If you don't have a use for it right now, then don't buy it.

[00:18:14] Karen Commins

Um. But I like, you know, so I like it going from chaos to organization and seeing their house cleaned up and the thought that they can now start fresh and maybe go on and have a happier life than they were having, because these people are usually very isolated, too. So, I mean, I would never, ever get to that level because I don't even like something on my kitchen counter. But my my computer desktop had gotten a little cluttered, like I said, because I would drag things there temporarily, like because I'm adding something to a page or I'm going to email something to somebody. And then so there were little too many little documents on my desktop. So I don't. I feel like I did need to do that, but I can. I don't think that I let my house get. Cluttered otherwise. Because I'm constantly, constantly trying to put things where it goes. And, you know, Drew's doing it, too. I'm reminding him and he'll remind me. And it's just the two of us without kids. So I think that helps, you know, to keep it. Yeah, but.

[00:19:30] Laura English

The the. You're definitely not a hoarder. We know that. And I do. I think I like that show, too. It's kind of creepy, but I like it. But a lot of people, a lot of I've seen firsthand some of the most creative people I know work in utter chaos. It's just, yeah, personal preference. And it doesn't mean you're, you know, you're not a clean person. You're not an organized person. Some people I know just they can work with in piles, and that's totally cool. My my need to clear my desk and make sure things are all neat and tidy is really my procrastination. Like Anne was talking about. I'm just procrastinating, getting started. Yep. And I love that you said perfect cup of tea because I'm obsessed with Must have my perfect cup of tea. I mean, the mug has to be just right. If the mug isn't right, I'm off. I'm just not going to have a good day. No.

[00:20:24] Anne Flosnik

No. Oh, a kindred spirit. I love it.

[00:20:28] Karen Commins

Suzy Van der Ham. Laura wants to know if you're available for house visits.

[00:20:35] Laura English

If it will.

[00:20:35] Laura English

Help me procrastinate more. And you live close by? Oh, yeah, sure. What do you need?

[00:20:41] Karen Commins

And I love that Alex Raby says my apartment is never as clean as when I've got a project on the docket. I feel so much better. I feel seen.

[00:20:50] Laura English

Oh, good, good. Yes, it's so true. And we're all. That's that way, Karen. I think we're all that way. Meaning we all would meet a deadline? Absolutely. I will. I will step over garbage to meet a deadline. But when it is our own thing, it's so bizarre.

[00:21:10] Karen Commins

Yeah, It's almost like I think other people's stuff is more important than my own.

[00:21:17] Laura English

That's you hit the nail on the head. That's exactly it. That's exactly it.

[00:21:24] Karen Commins

And that probably explains, too, why I will answer somebody's question ahead of progressing my own agenda.

[00:21:32] Laura English

Yeah.

[00:21:33] Karen Commins

Because I do tend to prioritize it higher, but plus it's usually that's usually a quick thing for me where working on my project is not a quick thing. So, you know, I do get a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment if I can help somebody and get them what they need. Because I think I'll get my thing done eventually. I've always gotten everything else done. This will get done too. But.

[00:22:00] Anne Flosnik

This is a bit like emails in the morning, you know, because they are all somebody else's agenda. And I'm curious so I do I want to know I want to see what what might be in store for me or what do I pressing things from somebody else's agenda do I need to take note of. But then and my morning is my best energy time. That is my absolute best self and it's trickling away on somebody else's agenda. You know, and I know this and all I have to do is just not look at it. But can I do that? No, because Curiosity killed the cat. Well, and.

[00:22:37] Karen Commins

Especially in the kind of work we do, you don't know if somebody else's email might be about a job that if you don't get back to them fairly quickly, you might lose out, you know? So there is that sense of pressure that, you know, maybe there's a nice surprise for me in this email that I really need to answer quickly. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:22:58] Anne Flosnik

And just the other day there was somebody checking up about was I still interested in an audition? And it was the first time I'd seen the whole thing. So you just never know. And it's that kind of experience that kind of keeps me anchored to a behavior that overall is probably more unhealthy than more unhelpful than it is helpful to me. I don't know.

[00:23:22] Karen Commins

Again, it's hard to change. A habits and routines and do things differently and not look at that email in the morning and do something of mine first. And then maybe. Look at that. I mean, I know some people who say, well, I only look at email at 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. or something like that. Yeah. I can't be one of those people. No, And I don't know if it's because I worked 25 years in it. I think that's part of it that, you know, you kind of get trained to live and breathe with email. And so I'm checking it all the time. And I it and unfortunately, social media has become an addiction that I'm trying to wean myself of.

[00:24:15] Anne Flosnik

Yeah, I try not to get sucked into that, but I do see is it. Andrea has a hand raised.

[00:24:22] Karen Commins

Oh, great. Thanks again, Laura. Appreciate those good suggestions. Did you? Oh, okay. Andrea's coming to the mic. Well, she was. Let's send another. Another invitation. See if she gets it. So she can't join right now, but maybe later. Okay. Maybe so. Oh, she says, invite me up. So maybe. Maybe the third time's the charm. Let's try it again. Andrea is now a speaker. Ta da! Oh, my.

[00:25:14] Andrea Aal

God. You guys, I'm so sorry. I've got a thumb that just wanted to hit the the. No, maybe later thing. And I was trying to hit. Yes. So sorry about that.

[00:25:22] Karen Commins

I was. I was thinking, was it something I said? No.

[00:25:25] Andrea Aal

No, it was. It was nothing. You said it was me. Operator error or whatever they call that. Hey, I have a question for you ladies. So everyone's talking about organization. I have the hardest time. I'm sure not. I mean, it feels the hardest to me. Um, and I can waste hours trying to organize. And then once I, you know, get things semi done, I'm the biggest mess maker. So I just wondered if anyone. Two questions. Has anyone found a system that really works for them? You know, I've read books and I have I've read every organization book, but I don't think I've found a technique. And so I wanted to throw that out there if anyone has a favorite. And the other thing is about file organization on my computer, and I don't know if there's anyone that you all know in audio books or in our kind of industry that does. I mean, I'd be willing to hire someone to help me. I'm so it's such a mess and I have a mac, so if anybody has something like that, I would love to hear it.

[00:26:28] Anne Flosnik

Well, I have the exact thing for you. You do? Yes. Years and years and years ago, very early on in my career, um, I did engage the services of [George Whittham](#), and he helped me. Yes. And and he did such a good job with that, that most of the engineers and things I've worked with subsequently, if they have occasion to kind of, you know, see the state that my files are in or whatever, they all compliment me. Yeah. And yes. And Karen will tell you, I am, you know, that kind of thing would not have come naturally to me. So, yes, I did. I hired George and so I can tell you. And that's years ago. But that was my personal testimonial that it works. I don't know whether he even does that anymore, but he did.

[00:27:14] Andrea Aal

It's probably it's probably four times what he charged you back then, but he might have someone on his staff that does it.

[00:27:20] Anne Flosnik

Right. Right. Right. But he certainly can do it. Or, you know, somebody. I bet.

[00:27:26] Andrea Aal

Thank you for that.

[00:27:27] Anne Flosnik

Sure.

[00:27:29] Andrea Aal

Well, somebody said Rebecca Macfie, I like to make my file folders into images. Mm.

[00:27:36] Anne Flosnik

Oh, the book covers or something, is it?

[00:27:40] Andrea Aal

I don't know. I don't know that that would help me. I would just have images strewn everywhere.

[00:27:47] Anne Flosnik

I know!

[00:27:47] Karen Commins

Do you use Finder?

[00:27:50] Andrea Aal

I use finder. Yes, I do. But here's the thing. It's it's my audio files that are a mess. And probably my files before I ever got into this were a mess. But but I use Studio one and I find it very hard to keep everything organized. In fact, I'm seeing Don Baarns later because I'm in a middle of a crisis. But just just the keeping of the files, you know, like all and this is probably too technical for clubhouse because we can't look at it but you know, studio if you know Studio One or I guess most of the programs will create a folder for you of whatever you're working on. If I if I type in a new song, it will make a folder. They call it a song on Studio One if I type in a new file name. But then somehow when I when I finish, I'm like, Well, why aren't the files inside the folder? So, so that's probably just something I need to learn. And, but in general file organization because I'm going to have to go back a while. That's why I do appreciate the suggestion and maybe George has has a team for that or.

[00:29:00] Anne Flosnik

And probably if you're going to be talking to [Don Baarns](#). Yeah.

[00:29:03] Karen Commins

And Rebecca said the same thing.

[00:29:05] Andrea Aal

I know. Yeah. I have asked Don. Don. Don might think I'm too far gone. I don't know. No, we.

[00:29:11] Anne Flosnik

Never, never, never, never. But there's one simple little thing, and Karen can correct me on my verbiage because I am no expert. But there's a very good thing that another engineer along the line showed me, and that is to hit kind when on your Mac, when you you're looking at files you know that thing just to check that and then that makes sure that all the kind of written things are in one area and all the audio files are listed under each other, that kind of organizes them visually that I find that that's true.

[00:29:43] Andrea Aal

But I'm a name naming person. I, I like to do it alphabetically, but I don't even think you can do that on the Mac. And it used to be able to, to organize by name but I don't I don't see it on there when I go to stacks which is what you're talking about right. When you when you right click on your desktop and it gives you the option to sort by stacks and then you can pick kind or size or whatever type.

[00:30:10] Anne Flosnik

Yeah. And probably there does not have an alphabetical thing as well.

[00:30:14] Andrea Aal

I thought it did. I'm looking at it right now. Let me see. But.

[00:30:17] Karen Commins

But if you were in Finder you, you would you could see it alphabetically. You could sort by title you could sort.

[00:30:26] Andrea Aal

And so Anne is talking about desktop, right? Anne So what you're talking about or who am I talking to? I'm sorry, I said. Anne I don't even know if that's well, and yes, it was Anne.

[00:30:36] Karen Commins

Yeah, Anne was telling you about search for kind and, and Karen was saying in Finder you can see everything alphabetized right? You can make folders. You can. I mean that's why I was saying how much do you use Finder? Because that's where I do file management. It's in Finder. Yes. And not necessarily in a program like Studio One, although, you know, when you're setting up a project, you have to tell it where it's going to store the files.

[00:31:02] Andrea Aal

Absolutely. Absolutely. And and that's my bad because I didn't know and I don't want to make this a thing about computers, girl. So I'll finish with this. If you don't want to spend more time on this, I totally get it. I, I didn't realize that I had put Studio one in the cloud and Studio one and the Cloud don't like each other. So, so, so that's part of the mess that I'm in now. But that's a separate deal. Mainly. I was really wondering if everybody has found or anybody has found a clutter declutter for your desk in your home and your office that is working for them.

[00:31:39] Karen Commins

You're so you're talking about physical stuff.

[00:31:42] Andrea Aal

Yeah, because that's what we want.

[00:31:43] Andrea Aal

That's what we were talking about and kind of got got us off. Well.

[00:31:47] Karen Commins

They both go together because and I was cleaning up my my digital desktop. But you know certainly in in your house. Have you ever read the books by [Peter Walsh](#)?

[00:31:58] Andrea Aal

I have not.

[00:31:59] Karen Commins

I love Peter Walsh. There used to be a show called Clean Sweep, and he was on that. And he talked about and this made the most sense of you look at the space in your house, whatever room you're in, and you have a vision for what you want your life to be like in that space. Yes. So like, this space is the kitchen. This space is the living room. This space is the studio. So there's certain things you want to do in that space, right? And so when you look at each thing, you say to yourself, yes, the question, does this thing support my vision of my life in this space? And if it doesn't, it needs to go. Maybe it needs to go to a different space in your house. Or maybe it needs to find another home altogether.

[00:32:49] Andrea Aal

Mm.

[00:32:50] Karen Commins

Yeah. You had a book, I think called It's Too Much Stuff. I can probably find the link. He used to be. I think he. I think he's been on Oprah before.

[00:32:59] Andrea Aal

Did you say Peter Walsh?

[00:33:01] Karen Commins

Peter Walsh. Okay. Um, and so. When you look at it from that standpoint of what do I want my life to be in this space? Um, it really. To me, it really changed everything because then it. Uh. Yeah, I'm looking. He's got several books. See, I've read his and I've read Marie Kondo. Yeah, I've.

[00:33:35] **Andrea Aal**

Read [Marie Kondo](#). Sure.

[00:33:37] **Karen Commins**

And I mean.

[00:33:40] **Andrea Aal**

Hers is. Hers is such a huge project to undertake. I think she wants you. I mean, I know you can break it down. She wants you to do the whole house in, like, three days or whatever, but. But I know you could break it down to room by room. You know, I liked it in the beginning. And then the, you know, bring joy thing just I lost the joy of trying to find joy. So.

[00:34:04] **Karen Commins**

Yeah. So I.

[00:34:05] **Andrea Aal**

Stopped. I stopped trying to find joy in my inanimate objects. But listen, I think it's a great idea. I just got. I just got tired of it.

[00:34:16] **Karen Commins**

But, you know, you start small, you don't even have to do the whole room like you could be on the phone or you could be waiting. How long do you sit on a line waiting for somebody to come on the phone? Right. You could you could declutter your kitchen junk drawer in the time you do that, like, just say I'm going to toss ten things, right? And so you start small. And then instead of thinking, I have to spend my whole weekend or my whole week or my whole month or my whole life cleaning up. Just start small and then you're building systems for yourself when you do that. Right. And but I'm going to I'm going to put the link to this one that he's got because like I say, I love Peter Walsh and I'm putting the link to this one in the chat. It's called [It's All Too Much An Easy Plan for Living a Richer Life with Less Stuff](#). And I mean, I can't say that I have less stuff, but I will say organization is my superpower and it's. It's organized and it all like everything has to be in a certain place. You know? So like, if it's something from my studio, it lives in the studio. I don't carry it to some other part of the house. So that's part of it. But just I really liked his book and like I say, his whole approach to it of looking at everything and say, Does this support the vision that I have for my life in this space?

[00:35:58] **Andrea Aal**

Got it. I copied the title. Thank you.

[00:36:03] **Karen Commins**

Susie Vanderham says I do my best decluttering when putting the laundry away. Oh, and Christine Rendell's got one [Let Go: Downsizing Your Way to a Richer, Happier Life](#). Huh? Uh. So and long ago. So there's physical stuff and then there's digital stuff. So long ago I read [David Allen's Getting Stuff Done](#) and I remember from that is you make everything alphabetic. But it is. And then you only handle email once. So like when you read it, do something with it, either answer it or forward it or delete it, but just don't let it sit there. Because, you know, pretty soon that could be like weeds climbing up your walls that they suddenly have overtaken everything.

[00:36:59] **Andrea Aal**

Right? There is no easy answer. I just was wanting to pick your brain, So thank you.

[00:37:07] **Karen Commins**

Well, I love to talk about this stuff and there's some good ideas in the chat. Alex Raby says, I love using Buy Nothing groups to give things a good home that I'm not using.

[00:37:21] **Andrea Aal**

Oh, what's that? A buy Nothing group? Is that a Facebook group or a think?

[00:37:26] **Karen Commins**

I wish Alex would come up to the mic and tell us. Would you do that, Alex, if I send you the mic. Not that I'm meaning to put you on the spot. Oh, okay. Oh, darn Work. Alas, that's right.

[00:37:45] **Andrea Aal**

I have a question for Laura English. Are you still here? Isn't Laura an engineer of some kind? Audio engineer.

[00:37:56] **Karen Commins**

My giving her a mic and she can answer that.

[00:38:01] **Laura English**

Hi. Yeah, I do the post for Pink Flamingo Books.

[00:38:07] **Andrea Aal**

Oh. I was just. I knew that you did something with sound, and I thought maybe you had a good organizing file system.

[00:38:19] Laura English

Um, well, yeah. Every time I get a book, I create folders immediately for it before I even start working on it. So I will have a pickup folder where all the pickup files go. The positron report. I'll have a recorded folder and inside the recorded folder will be all the raw files that I can see. But inside the recorded folder there will be a mastered, um, a mastered box, a room to room tone box. So as I'm going along and I'm saving work, I don't have to think about it. I just put it in its appropriate folder and then I have a pink flamingo folder and I also have a current audio book folder for myself, for my own narration. And so if, in the Pink Flamingo folder, if there's a folder inside there, I can see, I know that that hasn't gone to retail yet and. And I will keep it in a in a visual way until it's in retail. Once it goes into retail, I will then put it into a folder called completed hold. After about three months, the completed holds get tossed.

[00:39:33] Laura English

So everything is pretty visual for me in my file system. And it's I just set it up automatically right away. In the beginning, I have a folder for the documents. So the closing credits, the manuscript, all that stuff. Um. And yeah, for my current, for my own narration, I it's pretty similar. I'll set up a folder immediately and I'll have my of my raw folder, my room tone folder, my master folder. And depending on the project and depending sometimes I'll even have a final folder. So I may master everything. And I haven't listened to it. I haven't checked that they're all MP3 players. And once I've listened to it and it's now ready for retail, I turn it into an MP3 player and throw it in the final folder, if that makes sense, because I get interrupted from working all the time and I don't want to have to come back and be like, Where was I? I know in my master folder, if they're all WAV files, they have not been they have not had their final listen.

[00:40:35] Karen Commins

So you're actively moving them along, though, as you progress through the book, you're moving them from folder to folder depending on their their status.

[00:40:48] Laura English

Yeah. Right. So if I have raw files. So in a record in one folder, it's called Recorded files. In that one folder there are, let's say the book is 30 chapters, there are 30 files of raw or 33 if you have the opening closing. And then in that folder you also see a folder that says room tone and mastered. So if I'm working on chapter one through ten and get called away from lunch, I come back. I only see 11 through 30 sitting there because I've already moved them into mastered and. Does that make sense?

[00:41:29] Karen Commins

Yeah.

[00:41:31] Laura English

And again, if don't have time to do the mastering and the final listen all in one shot, I don't turn that WAV file into an MP3 until it has been absolutely listened and confirmed by me that it's ready.

[00:41:44] Andrea Aal

And you keep a separate room tone folder for for each thing.

[00:41:52] Laura English

I keep a room tone folder.

[00:41:54] Andrea Aal

A file or folder.

[00:41:55] Laura English

Yeah, for typically for each chapter, I will hold on to that room tone for each chapter. Mm hmm. Don't have to do that with every book, but I like to have that sometimes for certain books.

[00:42:10] Karen Commins

Do you create a characters folder for each book as well? Yep.

[00:42:15] Laura English

Absolutely. Um, so the way I do that, I'm looking at my folders right now. I will have what's called characters, and if you click on it and you open it, it'll it'll sometimes it depends on the series. Like if I have a six, I have a six book series right now that I'm working on. So those will have their own file. I'll have a little conversation with myself in that character's voice. I don't read anything from the script in that character's voice. I take the character and I talk about what the book's about from that character's perspective. Mm. So I just click on the file when I need to go back and say, What was that? What did she sound like? And I'll click on that folder, I mean that file and listen to it. But yeah, I definitely keep character files for sure.

[00:43:07] Karen Commins

Yeah. If I'm doing fiction, I'll save characters as we go through the book. So as soon as I say something, Drew's engineering for me. So as soon as I say something, he just extracts the little clip and saves it. So then we've always we've always got it. You know, a lot of people put their voices, they'll make sound clips and iAnnotate, but then it's married to your document and you may not be able to find it. So having it. On your computer, or you can just call up the name of the characters so much faster.

[00:43:40] Laura English

Yeah, and another quick way I'll do that is I'll read a chapter. If there's a lot of characters in one chapter and I've recorded it, I'll make a copy of it. And then I go through it and I, I will cut out all one character's lines, put it in its own file. Then I'll cut out the next character's lines, put it all in one file. So that's another really quick way for me to do character clips. Even though. So when I go to listen to it, it makes no sense because I've taken it all out of context. But it's all in that voice and it's all verbatim from the from the script, if that makes sense. It does. So I don't know if I helped you, Andrea, with any question you may have had, but. That is my system. It's very easy because when I go to save something, it already it pops up because it's already there. So I don't have to go looking for a folder.

[00:44:31] Andrea Aal

Right. Well, you're saying it's already there. In other words, you can just type into finder, search the name of the character and it's going to pop up. Is that what you're saying?

[00:44:41] Laura English

Well, no, it's already in the book. That's already in the book folder. So there's a folder inside that book. Right? Right. But I'm saying when I'm working on folder by. Sorry, File by file. Like right now I'm in chapter 30 of a book. Right. And if I want to save it when I click Save, I don't have to do any work because I click save as and there's a little drop down. It's already there. It'll say.

[00:45:03] Andrea Aal

See? Oh I see what you're saying. Yeah. That, that label, that folder is already there.

[00:45:07] Laura English

Yeah. It's super. They're all together in one place.

[00:45:15] Andrea Aal

Yeah. Well, I want to grow up to be like you, but I'm not yet. And, you know, you.

[00:45:22] Laura English

You asked about the Organization of Clutter. Yeah. Or you asked. You asked for, like, not computer organization. Right?

[00:45:31] Andrea Aal

Right. Just regular desk. Yeah. Your office or whatever. Yeah.

[00:45:36] Laura English

So I, I, I swear by list. So I have a, I have a Microsoft document that says to do list and I work on it every Sunday, sometimes Friday. And that list just carries over week to week, month to month. And the left side would be Monday through Sunday and the right side would be must do this week or next week. So I know what's a priority. And then the bottom is going to be things in the future that I want get done.

[00:46:06] Andrea Aal

Are you using the Microsoft to do app or do you just mean on a regular word, doc?

[00:46:10] Laura English

No, I just meant I just made a regular work doc that I go into every week and I modify it and I love it. I may not get stuff done, but I can see right in front of me, Like Karen said, when you're on hold, I can pick up my list and be like, Right, things I can do in ten minutes. Right, right, right. And then they're done and I get to cross them off and check them.

[00:46:28] Karen Commins

And there's some satisfaction in crossing something off the list. There is.

[00:46:32] Andrea Aal

That is. I agree with that for sure.

[00:46:35] Laura English

Yeah. I mean, my my to do list looks beautiful on Monday morning, but by Wednesday they're scribbles and scratches and add ons and eliminations. But I love it. It's like a work that I feel I've done something and then when I redo it the next week, I get to delete a lot of stuff and add some stuff.

[00:46:53] Andrea Aal

Yeah, that's the problem you keep adding. It's like, that's the that's the only thing with a list like that is it's just feels like it, it never goes down because you're, you're crossing stuff off which is awesome but then you're adding so it's like a, it's like Medusa's head or whatever. Yeah.

[00:47:12] Laura English

Well, yeah, but most of the stuff you're adding is stuff you're taking from the next week list or the true and moving over.

[00:47:18] Andrea Aal

Yeah, that's a good point.

[00:47:19] Laura English

Yeah. Because the Monday through Sunday you always have to have wiggle room for crap that comes up. Right. So.

[00:47:27] Andrea Aal

Well, thank you, ladies, very much.

[00:47:29] Karen Commins

Well, thanks. This has been a good conversation. It's actually one of my favorite topics is organization.

[00:47:37] Laura English

Me too.

[00:47:40] Andrea Aal

Yeah, I bet you are the same. I can get lost in the Container Store (<https://www.containerstore.com/welcome.htm>). Oh, boy. Oh, yeah. Or one of those types of places, you know. But then I buy containers. And then if you don't bother to put stuff in them or organize them, then it's like, why did I buy this? What was I thinking?

[00:47:56] Karen Commins

Does this fit my vision for my space?

[00:48:00] Andrea Aal

Yeah, exactly. My vision. Exactly.

[00:48:05] Karen Commins

But I also have list, although this of course is in Evernote. And when I get my Evernote course done, people will see this. But I'll make a plan for the month of what I want to get accomplished in the month. And then every day I have a daily plan and I only allow room for three things one that I really got to do and then two, if I can get there, it'd be great to do. And then it has a section of anything you did that wasn't on your list. Well, that section often gets a lot more comments, but, you know, I can look back and I know how I spent my days. I know how I spent my month. I know when things happened. But just having that monthly plan of this is what is on the plate this month. And these things have to happen. Like on the two Mondays, I send a newsletter to Narrators Roadmap members. Two Wednesdays I do Pit Stop, two Thursdays I do Narrator Uplift with Anne. So those things have to happen. And then am I doing a book? Am I trying to write articles? Am I right now trying to do a course so all those things get fit in? Because I don't want to feel day to day that I'm overloaded. I don't want to work 8 or 10 hours a day. If I wanted to do that, I would have stayed at the IRS! So.

[00:49:39] Andrea Aal

Karen, is your is your course going to be secrets about the IRS or is it. No. Is it a um, what's what did you just mention the Evernote? Evernote. Are you doing a course on Evernote? Yeah. Oh, my God, I'm in. I mean, that's.

[00:49:56] Karen Commins

That's where the conversation started is I was trying to figure out how to get started on it.

[00:50:01] Andrea Aal

I have have had Evernote forever and I don't really take it. I don't really use it well. So I'm looking forward to your course when you when you get it done.

[00:50:11] Karen Commins

Evernote underpins everything I do. So everything in my business is pretty much I'm running through Evernote. It's for a project incubator. It can't be beat. I mean, people think it's just note taking, but that's not exactly it because you can link to stuff. Um. I can link notes to note. I can share notes out with people, which I often do and. I have folders. I have stacks of folders. These are all the things I want to talk about because. For me, it was a game changer to have an info repository so I don't have to worry about it because if I have an idea, I write it in Evernote and it syncs to all my devices so we can be out at dinner and oh, put it in Evernote and then I've got it and, and I use it so much for business, but I use it for personal stuff too, that it's just indispensable.

[00:51:11] Andrea Aal

Do you have a name for your book? Or not yet. Because you just said it. If you don't.

[00:51:20] Karen Commins

I'm not writing a book.

[00:51:22] Andrea Aal

Oh, I thought you said you mean. What did you say about Evernote?

[00:51:26]

A course. I'm creating a video course for Narrators Roadmap members.

[00:51:30] Andrea Aal

That's what I was thinking. Don't know why I said, but I think you could call your course Evernote a game changer. That's what got my attention.

[00:51:38] Karen Commins

Well, I'm going to let me write that down on my note.

[00:51:42] Andrea Aal

You should. I'm giving it to you. That's what.

[00:51:46] Karen Commins

You put that on my course. Put that on my course outline. Name it. Evernote. You hear me? Typing Evernote: A Game Changer.

[00:51:57] Andrea Aal

Because if that would grab my attention for sure.

[00:52:01] Anne Flosnik

Yeah, of course it's gone.

[00:52:03] Karen Commins

One thing I've noticed is that I think it depends on how you like to see your information displayed to you on what thing is going to make the most sense to you. Now. No program is going to do everything you want it to do, but this is doing so much for me that I'm not using like it does my contact management. It does my relationship management, meaning that if I've reached out to somebody, I write down everything we talked about. I can put an alert. When's the next time I want to reach out to them? So it's doing all that for me. I've got my books' info in it. I mean, there's so much stuff that it does and that's why I want to do the course on it. But I've I've found that. If you like, to see things in the form of a spreadsheet. This might not be your favorite program or if you like, a Post-it or a card kind of approach. This might not be either because like Airtable is more of a spreadsheet look and Trello is a card look more for project management and you have to think about how you'd get the info out of it and whether you want it to perform other functions or strictly be used for, say, CRM and. I think that's something that I want to talk about, too, because notes and notebooks make so much sense to me, I think, that way. But if you don't. Automatically think that way. This might not be the way you want to go.

[00:53:45] Andrea Aal

Well, I love their web clipper. That's probably what. Yes.

[00:53:49] Karen Commins

Yes.

[00:53:50] Andrea Aal

Just if I love an article or I want to simplify it and send it to someone without all the ads, to me, that's that's how I use it. But I know there are so many more things you can do with it.

[00:54:01] Karen Commins

Oh, there are. There are. Yeah. And so that's what like I say, I have this whole big outline. And after talking with y'all here at the picnic, I have a better idea of how to get started. Start with something in the middle and not that first module. And. Stop looking at the whole outline. Just look at that one thing.

[00:54:30] Andrea Aal

Yeah. I would write what you love about it, Karen. Start with what you love about it. To me, that would be, like, the easiest part to write, I would think. Then you could get into like how to do all those things you love. At least you'd have a base kind of. Mhm. Here I am telling you, down to.

[00:54:51] Karen Commins

I wrote that down too, in my course outline. So I really appreciate all the help. I didn't. Didn't know this was how the conversation was going to go, but it's been really great for me.

[00:55:12] Andrea Aal

Uh.

[00:55:13] Karen Commins

See in the comments, uh, a couple people, Steve Corona, and it looks like he had to leave, but he was talking about creating a separate character catalog when we were discussing digital clutter and Victoria Connolly did the same thing. And Susie Vanderham says she is not allowed in the container store without adult supervision, which I think is hilarious.

[00:55:37] Andrea Aal

That's great.

[00:55:40] Karen Commins

But we are coming up on the top of the hour, and so I wonder if anybody else has any thoughts or questions or comments. I did want to point out that we've got a date. I don't know if you all saw this, but the APA is going to have the Audies in LA next year. Um, let's see. I think it's March 4th. Yeah. And then APAC is going to be the annual conference with the Audio Publishers Association Conference is going to be online on Wednesday, February 28th. And I love the online conference. I may be in the minority there, but I love not having to schlep through two airports and sleep on a hotel bed and be in an incredibly loud room with so many people talking. I love missing all of that. Rebecca Lee wants to know where the container Store is. She wants to go. There's one here in Atlanta. I don't know about. Anywhere else. But it's so great. I like to go there and I don't know, I also like to go to office supply stores because, like, I like going in Staples for a different reason because I like seeing all the things. And it just kind of gives me possibilities. I start thinking of what could I do with that? I was looking to see where you'd think the container store would list their locations on their. On their site. But I don't I don't see it at the moment, but I'll put the link here, Rebecca And maybe you can look at it and find one near you.

[00:57:34] Anne Flosnik

Yeah, just on the phone. Container Store near me. Near yourself. You know what I mean?

[00:57:48] Karen Commins

So. Anybody else got some interesting thing or comments? Questions. Or we all. Chewing on our chicken wings and just having the picnic. This has been such fun. I love how this conversation turned out. And. Uh oh. She says it looks like there are a couple in the suburbs. I think somebody's going to be making a trip to the Container Store. Uh. Well, if. Uh, nobody else wants to come up to the mic. I think we'll. Put a close to our picnic and get back on the road. The recordings are going to be available on clubhouse later today and in the near future, probably sometime next week. I'll post it with a transcript and any other links on NarratorsRoadmap. Anne, who's coming up tomorrow on Narrator Uplift?

[00:58:54] Anne Flosnik

Khai Dattoli from Podium Audio. Ooh, yes. So we're going to find out how life is lately.

[00:59:01] Karen Commins

Yeah, We had such a good talk with her earlier this year. And of course, now she's changed jobs and maybe that's changed everything with her. So that's going to be very interesting to to talk with her. Yeah, I hope hope everybody here will come back to Pit Stop and take another road trip with us on July 19th when we'll talk with audiobook narrator and production company owner Chris Ciulla. So in the meantime, I hope you all find joy in every journey and live the life of your dreams. I just appreciate all the interest and the fabulous conversation we've had today, and thanks an always for your great questions and support. And thanks to everybody for coming this afternoon and having a fun picnic with us. I really appreciate it. Hope you have a wonderful week, and we'll see you soon!

END OF TRANSCRIPT



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