



# Some Thoughts on Time Management A Principles Approach

Michael A. Heroux  
Senior Scientist

Center for Computing Research, Sandia National Laboratories  
Scientist in Residence, St John's University, MN

Sandia National Laboratories is a multi-program laboratory operated by Sandia Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary of Lockheed Martin company, for the U.S. Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration under contract DE-AC04-94AL85000.



# Time Multipliers

---

- Commit some time to Important but not Urgent work.
- Be done-done.
- Leave bread crumbs.
- Engage in complementary multi-tasking.
- Leave slack in your schedule.
- Work with synergistic people.
  
- How can we do this? Consider Kanban.



# Kanban principles

3

- Limit number of “In Progress” tasks
- Productivity improvement:
  - Optimize “flexibility vs swap overhead” balance. No overcommitting.
  - Productivity weakness exposed as bottleneck. Team must identify and fix the bottleneck.
  - Effective in R&D setting. Avoids a deadline-based approach. Deadlines are dealt with in a different way.
- Provides a board for viewing and managing issues

Task: Have Eureka moment by Tuesday.

# Basic Kanban

Backlog	Ready	In Progress	Done
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Any task idea</li><li>• Trim occasionally</li><li>• Source for other columns</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Task + description of how to do it.</li><li>• Could be pulled when slot opens.</li><li>• Typically comes from backlog.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Task you are working on <i>right now</i>.</li><li>• <b>The only Kanban rule: Can have only so many “In Progress” tasks.</b></li><li>• Limit is based on experience, calibration.</li><li>• <b>Key: Work is <i>pulled</i>. You are in charge!</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Completed tasks.</li><li>• Record of your life activities.</li><li>• Rate of completion is your “velocity”.</li></ul>

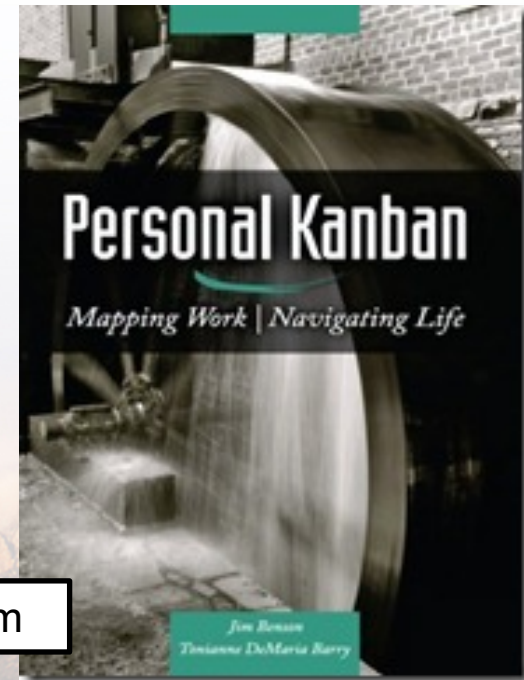
## Notes:

- Ready column is not strictly required.
- Other common column: In Review
- Can be creative with columns:
  - **Waiting on Advisor Confirmation.**



# Personal Kanban

- Personal Kanban: Kanban applied to one person.
  - Apply Kanban principles to your life.
  - Fully adaptable.
- Personal Kanban: Commercial book/website.
  - Useful, but not necessary.



<http://www.personalkanban.com>



# Kanban Tools

---

- Wall, whiteboard, blackboard: Basic approach.
- Software, cloud-based:
  - Trello, JIRA, GitHub Issues.
  - Many more.
- I use Trello (browser, iPhone, iPad).
  - Can add, view, update, anytime, anywhere.
  - <https://trello.com/b/04MQXyLo/personal-work-tasks>



# Big Question: How many tasks?

---

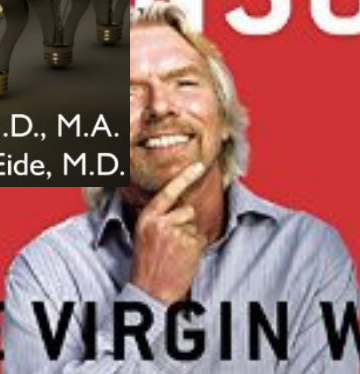
- Personal question.
- Approach: Start with 2 or 3. See how it goes.
- Use a freeway traffic analogy:
  - Does traffic flow best when fully packed? No.
  - Same thing with your effectiveness.
- Spend time consulting board regularly.
  - Brings focus.
  - Enables reflection, retrospection.
- Use slack time effectively.



THE **DYSLEXIC**  
ADVANTAGE

HARD  
NISON

Brock L. Eide, M.D., M.A.  
and Fernette F. Eide, M.D.



THE VIRGIN WAY

Complementary  
Multi-tasking.

make it stick



*The Science of Successful Learning*



How We Learn

Professor Monisha Pasupathi  
University of Utah



Understanding the Mysteries  
of Human Behavior

Professor Mark Leary  
Duke University

Topic:  
Science  
& Mathematics

Subtopic:  
Psychology

SOFT SKILLS

The software developer's life manual



Transformational Leadership:  
How Leaders Change Teams,  
Companies, and Organizations

Professor Michael A. Roberto  
Bryant University

Topic:  
Professional

Subtopic:  
Leadership Skills



The Pragmatic  
Programmers

(((AUDIO BOOK)))

The Agile Samurai

How Agile Masters  
Deliver  
Great Software



Theories of Human  
Development

Professor Malcolm W. Watson  
Brandeis University

Topic:  
Science  
& Mathematics

Subtopic:  
Psychology





# Time Multipliers

---

Kanban assists you with these principles:

- Commit some time to Important but not Urgent.
- Be done-done.
- Leave bread crumbs.
- Complementary multi-tasking.
- Leave slack in your schedule.

Not this one:

- Work with synergistic people.



# Importance of “In Progress” Concept for you

---

- Junior community members:
  - Less control over task.
  - Given by supervisor.
- In Progress column: Protects you.
  - If asked to take on another task, respond:
    - Is this important enough to become less efficient?
    - Sometimes it is.

# (Personal) Productivity++ Initiative

Ask: *Is My Work* \_\_\_\_\_ ?

## Productivity++

- ✓ Traceable
- ✓ In Progress
- ✓ Sustainable
- ✓ Improved



Version 1.2

<https://github.com/trilinos/Trilinos/wiki/Productivity---Initiative>