

McGuireWoods

# *Legacy Planning, Once Removed*

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## **Once Removed: Productive Life, Productive Day: Lessons from the Golf Course, Part 3**

### **Episode 42 Summary**

The last two episodes discussed the challenges everyone faces with being purposeful and productive throughout the day. Part 3 of this series continues the exploration of this topic through the metaphor of golf and other golf-like activities. This episode examines the metaphor of finalizing and polishing projects with care and using self-reflection to build positive habits for the future.

#### **Transcript:**

**(0:00):**

Hello and welcome back. I'm Steve Murphy, a trust and estates attorney with McGuireWoods, LLP. And this is Legacy Planning, Once Removed – my podcast on legacy, estate planning, family, trusts, and everything else on my clients' minds.

For those of you who are returning to the podcast, again, welcome back. And for those of you who are new to the podcast, again, welcome.

You'll find that this podcast is about more than just estate planning. This is about a broader concept called legacy planning, and even more so this is about the mindset of how you affect others and how they affect you.

What is that legacy that you're leaving behind?

And we have a tagline here. We like to say: Walk like you leave footprints.

This is another episode on productivity. Again, something that's on everyone's minds.

And this is part three.

In part one, we talked about certain activities and sports, and golf more specifically as a metaphor for how we can approach our day, how we can structure our day to be most productive and purposeful.

And then in part two, we continue that conversation.

And in those parts, we've laid out a couple of stages in a good golf round.

In those episodes, we laid out a few steps, a few lessons from golf or golf like activities that we could apply to our day.

So far, we have six steps.

**(01:45):**

Step one, asking ourselves in the working world this question that golfers ask: What am I working with today?

And then step two, that question we can ask ourselves: What does a good shot or day look like here for me?

And then step three, we borrowed a concept from golf. When we thought about how to begin our day, we thought about walking to the forward tees again—those three steps.

So, those three concepts are covered in part one.

And then in part two, we continued that metaphor.

Step four, we talked about how to begin our day with a big bold project. And I call that concept: Hit Driver.

Again, borrowing a concept from golf.

Step five was what to do if things go wrong. How do we get back on track and recover from setbacks?

So again, I borrowed this term from golf and talk about the recovery shot during your day.

And then step six, how do we continue that productive day with more progress?

And our real focus of getting on the green, getting to a point where we can focus on precision and finalizing a project.

**(03:08):**

So here we are, part three, we're going to continue with that golf metaphor. And now in our metaphorical golf round or golf hole, we're in a new stage, we are on the green.

And in these next three steps, we'll talk about this new stage of the day.

And again, how to stay productive and purposeful during this part of your day or your project.

In step seven, we'll use a golf metaphor, and we'll say this stage is about lag putting.

Let me start by summarizing the problem you might find yourself in during this stage of your day or this stage of a project.

This stage of a project is all about precision, proofreading, polishing before you send out that project, before you hit send on that important email.

So how do we approach this stage of a project?

Well, let's look to golf.

In golf, once the golfer is on the green, the golfer's focus now is putting the ball in the hole through putting. These are small movements, very precise, and they can be very costly if done improperly.

So how does a golfer approach that first put?

Well, this is a concept called lag putting.

If a golfer is 30, 40 feet away from the hole, it's very unlikely that golf golfer will actually sink that putt. So instead, the golfer's focus is on getting this ball closer to the hole, so they have a better chance of making their second putt while avoiding any risk.

Now, I've just commented about how golfers should be realistic with that long putt.

They shouldn't plan to make that putt. In fact, their real plan or hope would be to get the ball close for a second putt. That is realistically makeable.

**(05:11):**

Now, I'm not saying the golfer should try to miss that first putt, far from it.

It'd be great if that first putt went into the hole, but that's not the expectation.

There's a book by a psychologist and coach named, Dr. Bob Rotella called *Putting Out of Your Mind*.

And he says this about putting. He says, "Every putt should be approached as if you're trying to make the putt."

He says, "Every putt should be a green light putt.

So again, with our lag putting, we want to be realistic that we probably won't make this putt, but we also want to have this goal in mind of getting the ball very close.

And who knows, it might even go in the hole.

Okay, so now let's turn back to our working day.

What lesson does lag putting have for us for this final stage of our day or of a project?

Well, let's think about how you approach that final review of a project.

Before you hit send on that email or before you print out that material for the client.

In your final review, you want to have precision in mind.

**(06:22):**

Go slowly.

Look for any typos, look for any issues of grammar.

But importantly, these should be small movements.

This is very different from earlier in the day when you're hitting the driver, and it was all about progress and maybe not so much about precision.

Now, just like that lag putt, it'd be great if this was your final edit.

It'd be great if there was no more work to do.

But again, let's be realistic.

Your goal here is to go through and catch those issues on the first pass, and you're planning to go through a second time.

So that's step seven: lag putting.

Let's continue this metaphor.

Step eight, the make-or-miss putt. Again, the problem we might confront here is we are giving that final review to that project or that email.

**(07:17):**

A great example I think of is when you're sending that email, look for those last few typos, maybe typos in the subject line. Those can be really embarrassing.

Make sure that you're sending the email to the right people. Gosh, that can be a problem because of autofill. As you're writing that email, you want to make sure it's going to the right address.

But again, compare this kind of move to what you might have been doing earlier in the day with your big bold project.

This final review might just take a few minutes, but it's so important.

So how do we approach that? Again, let's go back to golf.

In golf, there's a concept called the make-or-miss putt. And this is essentially when you're close enough to the hole that you're really trying to make it.

Now, again, I'd remind you of Dr. Bob Rotella's comment that you're really trying to make every putt, or at least that could be a way to approach putting.

But here you might have a realistic expectation that this is the final putt.

So, you're really focusing on and getting it in the hole.

So, let's go to some statistics.

Professional golfers in the PGA tour tend to make 50% of their putts from eight feet away.

That actually depending on your perspective, could seem like a pretty low statistic.

We might think that the professional golfers make a lot more of their putts, but even they approach this pretty realistically.

So, with this make-or-miss putt, most golfers really have to think.

They only have a realistic expectation of making that final putt when they're very, very close to the hole.

**(08:58):**

Alright, how do we apply that to our day?

How do we apply that to the working world?

Well, again, this is that final review of the email.

So, it's important to get all those details right.

Now, you might find as you're reviewing that project or that email that you already caught everything.

That's almost like you made the lag putt.

Well, good for you, but don't be frustrated if you find a few last little things in that final review.

Don't skimp on that final review. Really focus.

Now, again, that might just take a few minutes for that final review, but it's so important. In golf, in fact, that stroke of the putt is as many strokes as that big, long drive that we talked about way back in step four.

Okay, so we finished step eight. And you might've guessed that I'm going to have nine steps here, just like half a golf round, nine holes.

Well through step one all the way through step eight, we've now actually finished the hole.

We've made the final putt. We've sent off that email or printed off that project.

So, what's next?

Well, how do we approach the end of our day?

How can we use the end of our day to set ourselves up for continued success the next day? And in days to come?

Well, let's again look to some lessons from golf.

**(10:22):**

In golf, there's a concept called the 19th hole. And this is the idea of people getting together after a round, maybe sharing a beverage, sharing some food, some fellowship, and talking about the round.

But you know, when you talk to golfers, sometimes there's these stories that everyone's sitting around complaining about the day.

But psychologists have shown that if you talk in that negative light about your golf, that can negatively impact your perception of yourself and even your performance in the future.

So, they suggest that maybe a better approach would be to talk about things that went well during that golf round.

Don't just complain about mistakes, be realistic, be honest, but talk about some good things that you did and maybe some repeatable things you can do in the next golf round.

Okay, now let's turn back to our workday.

What are the lessons of this post round reflection have for our workday?

Let's think about how we often approach the end of the day.

Many of us are exhausted by the end of the day. We might be looking at that to-do list where way back in episode one or part one, I talked about how sometimes we feel like that to-do list is even longer at the end of the day than it was at the beginning.

We might feel tired or frustrated, and we might be focused on all the things we didn't get done.

But let's use a lesson from those studies of golf.

Maybe it would be better if we focus on what went well during that day—not just what didn't you get to, but what did you complete?



(11:53):

What are some meaningful tasks that you accomplished?

How did you set yourself up for success that day?

And what are repeatable things you could do in the future?

You know, in these episodes I always like to close with a thought exercise.

So, let's close by thinking about that day, what went well during a particularly productive day?

And if you're wondering about what to focus on, maybe be helpful to focus on the different steps we've outlined in these three parts on productivity.

For step one, you could think of that day and say, how did you do in assessing your goals and limitations for that particular day?

How well did you do when you asked yourself, what am I working with today?

What should I really expect?

And then secondly, did you ask yourself, what is a good shot or day look like here for me?

How did you do in structuring that to-do list to set yourself up for real success?

And then step three, we talked about walking to the forward tee, starting your day with relatively easy tasks that reduce decision fatigue and get you started with great momentum.

How did you do?

Did you stick to that plan? Or did you get distracted by emails or other demands on your time?

Step four, we talked about hitting driver.

(13:23):

Beginning your day with that big bold project that gets you a long way to your daily goal.

Were you able to do that?

Were you able to carve out that time for that big project?

Step five, we talked about the recovery shot, getting yourself back on track if things go awry.

What kind of setback did you face that day?

And again, don't focus on the negative of the setback.

Focus on how did you recover? How did you get back on track? And how can you repeat that in the future? And then getting to the green.

And then lastly, with those putts, with that final review of that project or that email, maybe it didn't take a long time, but were you focused?

Did you stay in the moment?

Did you treat those last few steps in the task with the respect they really deserve?

And then lastly, why not?

Let's also focus on how you're doing with this self-reflection studies have really shown that thinking about these positive outcomes can have a great impact on your mood and also your productivity.

Well, this has been great to share with you some thoughts on golf or golf like activities and how they can maybe be implemented in our daily lives.

I'm Steve Murphy and this has been Legacy Planning, Once Removed my podcast on turns out, life in general.

I'll see you next time. And in the meantime: Walk like you leave footprints.