

Redefining productivity

As skills become the currency of our careers, we need to shift from a focus on finding more **time to do** towards making more **time to think**.

When we make time to think, we are less likely to get stuck in unhelpful patterns, we become better at solving problems and we are more able to explore opportunities.

Thinking traps to watch out for

🔗 "I'll have more time to think when..."

The problem with this milestone mindset is that the 'when' rarely comes along.

🔗 **Thinking = lots of time**

When thinking requires a day to do, it rarely gets prioritised in our diary over more urgent tasks.

🔗 **Not having time to think is out of my control**

When we feel like the victim of our environment, we lose confidence in our ability to change the outcome.

Coach yourself questions

Who do you know who makes time to think?



What can you learn from their approach?



How would better thinking help your work?



Ideas for action



1. Start a thoughtbook

Develop a habit of capturing your thoughts physically (using a notebook or post-its) or digitally (using tools like [Miro](#) or [Mural](#)).

Use these prompts to stimulate your thinking:



Create a 'To Think list' to help develop clarity on what you need more time to think about



Set a timer for 5mins, pick a question you want to ponder and create a 'thinking mind-map' of your first thoughts.



Practice free writing. Fill a page on the thing you want to think about and see where you get to.



2. Focus on thinking themes

Having a specific theme for your thinking helps frame your thoughts. Themes could include; *wellness, impact, purpose, performance*. Picking themes that are important to you helps you to emotionally connect with the importance of the action.



3. Together thinking

Thinking time with others can act as a forcing function to stay focused. Pick a topic, time and place where people can prioritise 'thinking mode'. Share questions to consider in advance and provide 'brain breaks' for individual reflection.



4. Create an effective environment

Reflect on what your best thinking environment might be. Regularly plan to spend time in that environment to create a positive association with a physical place and your mental space.



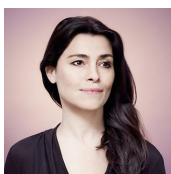
5. Have 'anti-thinking' awareness

Reflect on what gets in the way of your thinking. It could be your mindset or even some practical considerations.



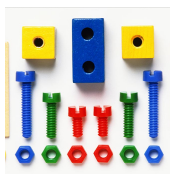
Ask yourself; What needs to stop so that I can start?

Recommended resources



This Cultural Life podcast

Artist & set designer Es Devlin talks about the influences and experiences that have inspired her.



The Making of a Corporate Athlete

Harvard Business Review article by authors [Jim Loehr](#) and [Tony Schwartz](#)



Diverse thinking

Helen talks to author Matthew Syed about cognitive diversity and the power of diverse thinking on Squiggly Careers #139