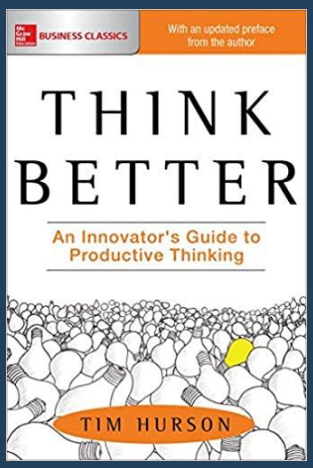

Think Better

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Year of publication: 2017
Author: Tim Hurson
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First published in Brazil in January 2009 by DVS Editora with the full title of "Think Better: An Innovator's Guide to Productive Thinking", the book has 312 pages and is divided into four parts and 14 chapters.

Score

8

8 Aplicability
9 Inspiration
7 Innovation
9 Impact on results
8 Structure

Main ideas of the book

- **Success** has less to do with what we know and more with the way we think;
- Know how to separate **creative** from **critical thinking**;
- Always following the same path may not be the **best solution**;
- **Creativity** can be learned;
- Thinking takes effort, but it's worth it.

To whom is this book indicated?

For business owners, leaders and coordinators looking to improve the problem solving the process of their business or teams.
If you believe that you can improve your thinking productively to generate better quality ideas more often in your business, professional and personal life, then this book is for you.

Visão geral do livro

Overview: Context

The author begins the book by telling the story of an experiment done with the processionary caterpillar. These caterpillars basically follow in line the trail left by their leader without ever straying or seeing what's around them.
During the experiment, the caterpillars were placed in circles and kept walking around until some died or passed out, preventing others from following in their wake and forcing them to go elsewhere.
The author says that Productive Thinking is about the freedom to be able to think on your own and not just follow the bright trail ahead of us as caterpillars do.

> *"If you can identify an area where your universe could be improved, put productive thinking to the test. The more you use it, the more natural it will become, the finer you will become and the more advantages you can derive from it."*

Benefits of Productive Thinking

The author points out that nothing is perfect, that is, there is nothing in the world that cannot be improved and you can have productive thinking that can help you see solutions to everyday problems more easily.
In the age of the internet, everyone has easy, fast and almost no-cost access to all information. Therefore, knowledge is no longer a major differential in today's world according to the author. Hurson says that what sets people apart is not who knows more, but who thinks better.
PTM (Productive Thinking Model) is a method that can be taught and learned, so anyone willing can learn to think differently and increase their competitiveness in the marketplace.

Barriers that keep us from being creative and effective

Deep thinking, that of true concentration, is hard work. Our brain consumes 20% of the oxygen and calories we burn daily just for the basic functions of staying alive.
To save energy the brain uses three devices, either it is scattered, or in reaction, or just follows patterns. All this to avoid really thinking and doing the hard work of thinking.
While the brain's three mechanisms for saving energy or labor are useful for everyday life, they serve as barriers to productive thinking, to creativity.
The example used in the book by the author is the pen, which does not write-in space for lack of gravity. While the United States spent a fortune and a lot of time developing a pen that worked, the Soviets were able to solve the problem simply by using pencils.
The solution might be simple, easy, and cheap, but the barrier of creativity and the rule of always trying to develop something with technology prevented Americans from thinking about using pencils as a solution and saving time and money.

Overview: Principle

Productive and Reproductive Thinking Concepts

Quite simply, the author says that reproductive thinking focuses on refining something that is already known, while productive thinking is focused on generating new things, new answers, new solutions.
Reproductive thinking is the reaction of something already known, the stimulus will always cause the same reaction. They are repetitions, it is to do something because that is how it has always been done. This may be good for a time and basic functions, but in others it may be an opportunity to improve a process.
Productive thinking, in turn, creates something new, thinks of a better, more efficient, and more creative option to respond to stimulus. In the book, the author says that Reproductive thinking can work and adapt something hopelessly obsolete like the whip. Only productive thinking can imagine a car.

Productive thinking changes the way we view the world, not just dealing with change but creating change. It's using creative thinking, and the critic, more specifically, pushing the two completely apart.
We first use the creative to generate as many ideas and solutions as possible, and then come back to them with critical thinking and evaluate their applicability.

Investigate Problems X Jump to Conclusions

According to the author, knowing something can be considered as one of the biggest obstacles to productive thinking. When one person already knows how to do something, they can prevent another person from creating a new and more efficient way to solve that problem.
The idea of productive thinking is that even when an answer seems obvious, one keeps questioning, asking, and investigating. Obvious and pre-established answers keep us from thinking.

Good and bad brainstorming

Tim Hurson presents the idea that there are two types of brainstorming the good and the bad. The bad is one where ideas are automatically classified as good or bad and bad ideas are discarded.
In good brainstorming, all ideas are valid and accepted and posited as possibilities, critical thinking is set aside at this point. The author says that research shows that in a good brainstorming the ideas are divided into three parts that follow chronologically.
The first is the most normal ideas, the second is when the ideas start running away from commonplace and daring a little more and the third and last is when most of the time, the best ideas and the most creative solutions come up.

Overview: Theory

To put the MPP theory together, the author and his thinkX company created the six steps of productive thinking.

Step 1: What is going on?

This step, according to the author, is made of five questions:

- *What is yearning?* - What needs to be fixed or improved.
- *What is the impact?* - How this problem can shake people.
- *What is the information?* - What we have information about the problem.
- *Who is involved?* - Which stakeholders.
- *What is the vision?* - Focus on what could be.

Step 2: What is a success?

Here the author states that the focus is on the future. At this stage, it is important to visualize the problem already solved. What is the support of this solution? What would be a success? Here you need to be able to create a framework for this solution.

Step 3: What is the question?

Continuing the method of productive thinking, the author says that one must be able to identify which questions need to be answered in order for the future of the previous stage to be reached.
Question what you have to do, have, achieve, create, change, so that the future, the desired answer becomes possible.

Step 4: Generate Responses

Here you seek answers to all the questions raised in the previous step. Hurson says that one must then select the most promising answers and explore them. Even if the answers still don't look like the final product solution, keep working.
You need to explore and deepen all the most promising answers in order to define the main supporting parts of your solution.

Step 5: Forge the Solution

Only at this stage, after deepening your answers, is it possible to create a solution to the proposed problem. With the most promising ideas developed in the previous step, a real solution is shaped.
You have to evaluate the potential of ideas by comparing them with the criteria of the second step. Once you have identified the solution that best fits your need to test and refine until you have a solid solution.

Step 6: Align Resources

This step defines what is required to implement the solution. What features, actions, measures, changes need to be made so that the solution created in step five is possible.
By the end of the last step, you have a totally realistic action plan for implementing the solution, taking into account all your variables, needs, and stakeholders.

Overview: Practice

PTM is a method that has been developed based on many studies and, according to the author, has worked in many situations. But like every theory, it may not be totally perfect, it is always subject to change and adaptation.
The author compares the method to a disposition, saying that it is not something in a cast that cannot be adapted to the reality of its problems. Remembering that there can be no rush to generate creative results and finding the wrong answers in a hurry is counterproductive and a waste of time.
Tim Hurson states that PTM is only indicated when new ideas are needed to meet challenges. When a new idea is not needed, the method need not be applied.
practice leads to perfection, and productive thinking and creativity within it can be trained and perfected. The author goes back to his early point in the book where he says he can always keep improving everything and so one must always be putting all the steps into practice to improve thinking skills.

What other authors say about it?

For Daniel Goleman, author of "Emotional Intelligence," strong emotions can interfere with attention and all aspects of clear thinking. Instead of trying to eliminate their feelings, people should strive to find a smart balance between reason and emotion.
In the book "Fast and Slow: Two Ways of Thinking," author Daniel Kahnemandiz teaches how the human mind works. In addition, he also teaches how to make the best decisions.
Finally, in the book "Mindset" by psychologist Carol S. Dweck, it discusses how our beliefs shape our behavior and growth. Human beings can be taught to respond in different ways, how to face challenges and think differently.

Okay, but how can I apply this in my life?

After discovering all the details of the Productive Thinking Model, here are some tips to help you:

- Learn to identify the times when better solutions can be applied.
- Don't be afraid to think differently. Finding a better and more efficient solution to a problem may only depend on you.
- Apply MPP steps whenever you need new ideas to meet challenges.
- Take your time, creativity cannot be rushed.
- Know how to differentiate between good and bad brainstorming and always try to get people to the useful side of the activity.

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