



We Help You Focus Clearly,  
Organize Effectively,  
And Act With Courage

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## Tips to Regain your “Think Time”

Quality think time is distraction free:

- Turn off your email for 30 minutes.
- Turn off your phone for 30 minutes.
- If your desk is too distracting, go to an unused conference or work room for 30 minutes.
- Create a standing appointment on your own calendar for focused think/work time.
- Tell your secretary or kids not to bother you for 30 minutes unless there is a life-threatening emergency. Discuss the definition of “life threatening.”

If you are having difficulty focusing:

- Breathe deeply to calm your mind.
- Make a list of everything you need to think about and attend to. Then pick one.
- Set a timer and commit to focus on this one topic for 20-30 minutes.
- When time is up, permit yourself to stop, take a break, or if you are really on a roll, extend your think time for another 20-30 minutes.
- Consider adding physical activity (such as a walk) to quell any “antsy-ness” and take your thinking to the next level.

Keep a private journal (electronic or otherwise) to record your reflections, ideas, etc. You don't want to lose them now that you have them! ☐ *CMP*

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## Time to Think

By Cathy Perme

When was the last time you had a really good “think?” You know, the kind that was reflective, productive, and creative? The kind that produced new ideas, perceptions, or awareness? The kind of thinking that helps you tap into your own wisdom to solve problems more productively? If this kind of thinking and think time seems like a luxury to you these days, you are not alone!

The pressure to “produce” at work has never been higher. With a struggling economy, we are faced with the need to be more and more productive, with greater and greater urgency. Unfortunately, this most often translates into holding more meetings and plowing through more mail, with less time for actual *thinking*.

The reality is that strategy, innovation and breakthroughs *depend* on our ability to think well, which means taking the time and having the discipline to do it. Unfortunately, scurrying around from place to place (even electronically) provides little time to reflect on information, see patterns, identify new approaches, consider options or weigh consequences. As a result, external pressure may force reactive and suboptimal decisions to be made.

This is not just an issue for us at work; it is an issue for the future of our economy. The Newsweek-Intel Global Innovation Survey (reported in Newsweek 11-23-09) reported that “Americans have real doubts about their ability to maintain their edge in innovation.” Although the article suggests more emphasis on careers in science and technology, I believe that for America to regain its competitive position, we also need to be able to recapture the *time* for thinking in general – not as a luxury but as a discipline.

I recognize that people have different styles and preferences in *how* they think – and whatever works for you is great. But I do suggest that you honor that process within yourself and make it a priority in 2010 to give yourself the time and space to do it. Who knows, you might just change your world! ☐