

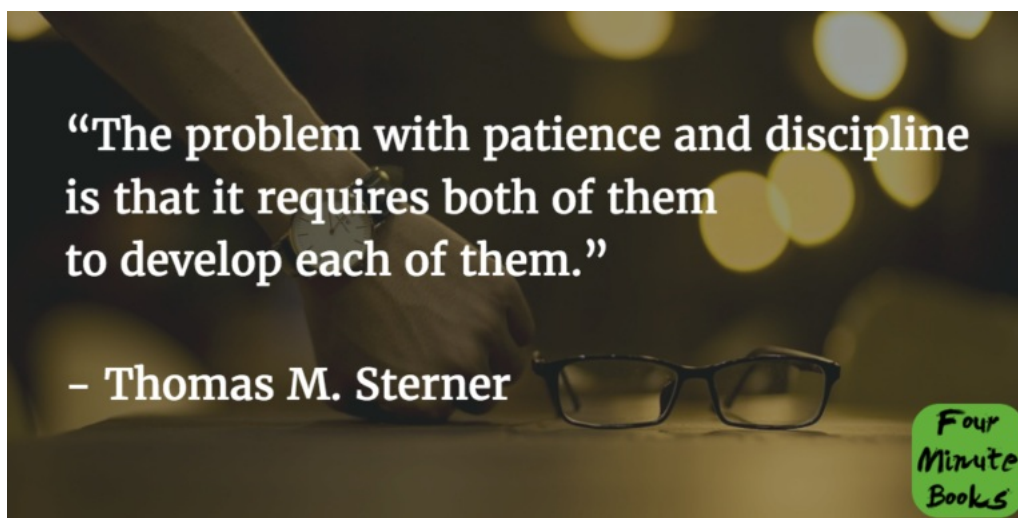
The Practicing Mind Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/the-practicing-mind-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *The Practicing Mind shows you how to cultivate patience, focus, and discipline for working towards your biggest goals, by going back to the basic principles of practice, embracing a child-like trial-and-error attitude again and thus make working hard towards mastery a fulfilling process in itself.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



Tom Sterner used to be a chief concert piano technician for 25 years. That means he was in charge of all technical elements related to the piano for performances of big bands and star musicians, like the tuning, electric setup, synchronization, etc. for concerts at a major performing arts center, where legends like Ray Charles and Fleetwood Mac gave performances.

Over time and on the side, Tom has developed an approach called Present Moment Functioning (PMF), which helps individuals achieve a state of high performance by focusing entirely on the present – think of it as entering the flow state on command.

Since 2014, he focuses on coaching people in PMF and giving lectures full time, but he's also shared his approach in *The Practicing Mind*.

Here are my 3 favorite lessons from it:

1. Forget your end goal every time you work.
2. Never use goals as an indicator of progress.
3. Apply the Do, Observe, Correct technique to keep your productivity in check.

Are you prepared to make your mind a practicing one? Let's learn how to stay in the present moment to increase your performance!

Lesson 1: Completely forget about your end goal every time you work towards it.

Wait, what? Did I seriously just suggest that you should forget what you're working towards?! Yes and no. What you shouldn't forget is what you're doing right now, what the end goal of any given day is, what your final output before you drop the pen, close the laptop or punch out on the clock is.

What you can gleefully hand over to the "forgotten" folder in your brain for that day though, is the ultimate, long-term, final outcome. The monthly salary goal you're shooting for, the revenue goal you're working towards or the novel title appearing on Amazon.

Because here's how procrastination happens:

1. You realize what you're doing right now isn't that much fun.
2. You remind yourself that it's part of something bigger.
3. You remember what that bigger thing is.
4. You realize how far away you are from it.
5. You get discouraged and frustrated.
6. You need something easy, light and fun to console yourself.
7. You open Youtube.

But if you can manage to shut out that bigger thing for an hour or two and just focus on the process, that's when real work gets done.

So yes, forget about your end goal while you work.

Lesson 2: Don't use your goals as an indicator of how much progress you've made.

Another area where your big aspirations do more damage than good is when looking at your overall progress bar. Not the daily one, but the monthly, annual or even multi-year measuring stick you use to compare your current success to your former, past self.

Here's how: Let's say you've graduated college and started a job that pays \$40,000 a year. Of course, that's just the beginning, so you decide to work hard and get promoted as fast as possible, which gets you a position that pays \$60,000 two years later. Once you have that, it'll feel natural to set the next goal to earning \$80,000 or \$100,000 a year – *but where do you go from there?*

If you assess how far you've come by looking at where you want to go next, you're setting yourself up for a very miserable life.

Setting bigger and more ambitious goals as you go along is good, it's just the natural way any upwards curve follows, but if they become self-serving, a way for you to determine your success by, you'll just be in a bad mood constantly, because *you're never there yet*.

That's why it's sometimes good to take a second, step back, turn around and actually *look* back, not forward. You'll see you have plenty reasons to be proud and feel a lot better about tackling the next challenge.

Lesson 3: When you lose your focus, use the Do, Observe, Correct technique to get it back.

Staying in the present moment and working on a task with maximum focus is hard enough as it is. But sometimes, feelings can make it almost impossible to keep at it. In those cases, you can use what Tom calls the Do, Observe, Correct technique.

Here's how it works:

1. You start *doing* something productive, but pay attention to your concentration level. Notice when it drops!
2. Then you *observe* the behavior you'd like to change by asking why you're losing your focus.
3. Lastly, you *correct* those negative emotions by seeing how they influence your productivity and really make everything seem worse than it actually is.

For example, let's say you're putting together a balance sheet of a company and find your thoughts drifting, because you're bored with the work. Once you notice that, you can pinpoint that what you'd like to avoid is getting bored at work and correct course by coming up with reasons why accounting is fun, listening to some music or turning your task into a game, for example.

Overall, **the more you apply the Do, Observe, Correct technique, the better you'll become at self-observing**, which is the biggest supporting factor of improving your behavior.

The Practicing Mind Review

The Practicing Mind combines common productivity advice with common mindfulness advice, which, in turn, makes it pretty uncommon. Most books focus on one or the other, whereas this one mixes the two to give you the best of both worlds – and it works. This is pretty much how I stay productive!

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- One human flaw we all have in common
- How we turn high expectations into a disadvantage
- What you can do to make a big task seem less daunting
- How you can break smaller tasks down even further

Who would I recommend The Practicing Mind summary to?

The 17 year old, who's frustrated by all the reading she has to do for school, the 35 year old, who's had a thriving first decade of his post-college career, and is starting to think there is no sense in making more money, and anyone who's often frustrated after a long day of hard work, on which they still didn't get much done.