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Being smart isn't about knowing everything.

It's about knowing how to think.

10 mental models that will accelerate your career (backed by science):



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1. Pareto Principle (80/20 Rule)

The Pareto Principle, or 80/20 rule, states that a small amount of your efforts lead to the majority of your results.

20% of your actions yield 80% of your outcomes

Actionable Lesson:

- *Identify your most powerful levers.*
- *Put all your energy into them.*
- *Double down on what moves the needle.*



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2. Peter Principle

The Peter Principle suggests that employees get promoted until they reach their level of incompetence.

Every promotion might be a step closer to a job you can't handle.

Actionable Lesson:

- *Never stop learning.*
- *Don't take lateral promotions.*
- *Trial a role, before going full time.*



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3. Parkinson's Law

Parkinson's Law states that work expands to fill the time available for its completion.

Given more time, we take more time.

Actionable Lesson:

- *Run your life via timelines.*
- *Schedule meetings in 5min intervals.*
- *Audit all scheduled meetings for time.*



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4. Dunning-Kruger Effect

A paradox where beginners believe they are experts, and experts feel like they are beginners.

This knowledge illusion distorts our self-perception.

Actionable Lesson:

- *Seek honest feedback.*
- *Stay open to learning.*
- *Anchor your self-assessment in reality, not assumption.*



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5. Ostrich Effect

The Ostrich Effect is when we ignore the negative instead of facing it right away.

Ignoring problems doesn't make them disappear.

Actionable Lesson:

- *Address challenges head-on.*
- *Immediate action limits major loss.*
- *Turn a blind eye to nothing, face everything.*



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6. Hedonic Adaptation

A regression to the mean for happiness.

No matter how big the win or loss, humans regress to their baseline level of happiness.

Actionable Lesson:

- *Process over outcomes.*
- *Never let feels get too high or too low.*
- *Stay humbly confident.*



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7. Confirmation Bias

Confirmation Bias locks us into our beliefs.

We are attracted to facts that are aligned with our current beliefs.

This bias limits our thinking and understanding.

Actionable Lesson:

- *Be open to opposing views.*
- *Regularly question your beliefs.*
- *Make well-rounded, unbiased decisions.*



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8. Law of Diminishing Returns

More effort doesn't mean more output.

Beyond a point, each extra input yields less and less output.

Actionable Lesson:

- *Be strategic with your efforts.*
- *Focus on resource distribution.*
- *Be aware when enough might be enough.*



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9. Sunk Cost Fallacy

The Sunk Cost Fallacy is to continue investing in lost causes because of past investments.

We let past losses dictate future decisions.

Actionable Lesson:

- *Ignore sunk costs when making decisions.*
- *Evaluate choices based on future, not past.*
- *Your most valuable investment is time.*



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10. Halo Effect

This bias clouds your judgment in over-indexing a singular positive trait, ignoring negative traits.

A good first impression can cause us to overlook other traits.

Actionable Lesson:

- *Judge a person in totality.*
- *Look beyond the surface.*
- *Evaluate people based on all traits.*



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Thanks for reading!

What mental models would you add?

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