

Professional Practice Playbooks

Thinking Space

WORKBOOK

A two-week companion to the playbook

[illegible]

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Make room for the experiment

This workbook helps you choose one ordinary part of your day to leave free of added content, try it for two weeks, and decide what to keep. It is written for technical professionals working within organisations or running their own consulting practices.

Use it alongside Thinking Space: Leave some time for your mind to catch up. The playbook explains the practice; these pages help you fit it into your life.

How to use these pages

Before you begin, use Exercises 1 to 3 to notice your habits and choose a workable window. After your first attempt, use Exercise 4 for a brief reflection. Exercise 5 is optional, for thoughts you want to keep. Return to Exercise 6 at the end of two weeks.

Write a few words where they help. You can type into the spaces or print the pages. There is no need to complete a daily log, record every thought, or produce an insight. Leave the workbook aside during your quiet window.

The practice in brief

- Aim for about fifteen minutes, several times a week. Begin with less if that is what fits.
- Leave out messages, reading, feeds, podcasts, and music. Put your phone somewhere inconvenient to check.
- Let your thoughts move without assigning yourself a problem to solve. Capture only what you would otherwise keep trying to remember.

My two week experiment begins on: _____

I will review it on: _____

EXERCISE 1

Notice where your gaps go

Before you begin | A few observations from one ordinary day

Useful content can fill every gap. Notice a few occasions when you reach for messages, a tutorial, a podcast, or something else as soon as time opens up. Include moments outside work. A small sample is enough.

Moment in my day	About how long	What I did or took in
After a project meeting	5 minutes	Checked messages, then industry news

Which response seems to happen most automatically?

Was I looking for something I needed, filling the moment, or both?

Keep the description factual. There is no need to label any activity as good or bad or change every gap you notice.

EXERCISE 2

Choose an ordinary window

Before you begin | Find a repeatable occasion

Think of a recent stretch when you were not reading, listening to content, or in conversation. It might have been a walk, a simple household task, or a quiet break. Use that experience to find a realistic place to begin.

When did I last have time like this, and did the occasion suit me?

List two or three possible windows. Aim for about fifteen minutes, several times a week; this is a starting point, not a minimum requirement. If a full window is hard to find, choose a shorter one.

Possible window	When it could recur	What usually fills it

The window I will try first

What will remind me to begin, and what will mark the end?

For example: after lunch on days I work from home, I will take a familiar walk and leave my headphones behind.

EXERCISE 3

Make the window workable

Before you begin | Set up the occasion you chose

Choose a time when you can reasonably be unavailable. Account for team, client, caring, or on-call responsibilities. If one part of the day does not allow that, try another.

What will I leave out during this window?

For the first two weeks, try it without feeds, messages, reading, podcasts, or music. Let the activity itself be enough.

Where will I put my phone so checking it takes a deliberate effort?

What is most likely to interrupt the window, and what can I arrange?

If this occasion falls through, what is my next realistic opportunity?

If you miss a window, take the next one. If the same arrangement keeps failing, change it. You do not need to make up missed minutes.

EXERCISE 4

Try the first window

After your first attempt | A brief reflection

Leave this page aside while you try the activity. Let your attention move without giving it an assignment. Afterwards, record only what you remember and want to note.

Date: _____ Activity: _____

What did I notice about the urge to check or listen to something?

What came to mind, if anything?

This might be a work question, a personal concern, something around you, or nothing memorable. None of these is a required outcome.

What would make the next window easier to use?

If a thought keeps going in the same distressing circle, return attention to your surroundings or the activity, shorten the window, or stop. Discomfort is not a measure of progress.

EXERCISE 5

Keep a thought without holding it

Optional | Choose a capture method before your next window

If trying to remember an idea takes over your attention, jot down a few words and continue. A small notebook or index card works well. If you use your phone, make the note and put it away.

My simplest capture method

How I will keep a quick note from turning into a longer task

Return to a note afterwards

Use the space below only if something needs a second look. You do not need to sort every thought. Some can be left alone; others may call for information, a decision, a small action, or a conversation.

For example, “check volume assumption” might become a question for a project colleague. “Miss making things” might prompt you to make room for a personal interest. Choose later whether either needs action.

A thought I chose to keep

Does it need anything from me now? If so, what and when?

If no thought needs keeping, skip this page. This exercise can be worthwhile anyway.

EXERCISE 6

Review the two weeks

At the end | Decide what fits your life

Look back at the experiment as a whole. There is no score to calculate and no requirement to report better performance. An uneventful but welcome pause is a valid outcome. So is noticing little difference.

Was the window workable? What helped or got in the way?

Did anything become clearer at work or elsewhere?

For example: an assumption worth checking, a conversation to have, a question about your direction, or something outside work you want to make time for.

Was the time worthwhile even when no useful idea appeared?

What will I keep, change, or stop, and why?

My next step and when I will take it

Keep the arrangement small. The aim is to leave room to think within the life you have.