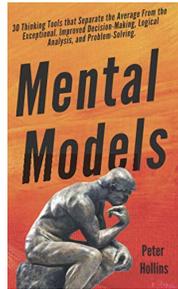


Your Kindle Notes For:



Mental Models: 30 Thinking Tools that Separate the Average From the Exceptional. Improved Decision-Making, Logical Analysis, and Problem-Solving.

Peter Hollins

Last accessed on Sunday August 22, 2021

56 Highlight(s) | 0 Note(s)

Location: 99

way. It leaves you woefully unequipped for whatever lies outside your primary knowledge base, but the answer isn't to become an expert in every field. It's finding your own latticework of mental models.

Blue highlight | Location: 108

So what exactly is a mental model? It's a blueprint to draw your attention to the important elements of whatever you are facing, and it defines context, background, and direction. You gain understanding even if you lack actual knowledge or experience, and the ability to make optimal decisions.

Location: 130

By definition, our personal mental models are limited and only reflect a biased perspective.

Location: 168

The mistake is thinking of "important" and "urgent" as synonymous and not realizing the huge gulf of difference between the two terms and how you should prioritize them. The ability to distinguish the two is a key step in lowering your anxiety, stopping procrastination, and making sure that you are acting in an optimized way.

Location: 327

Sometimes, that's the best we can do as a person. We can't predict the future, but we can't not think about it.

Blue highlight | Location: 338

How broadly will this decision affect things in the future? What will your decision do beyond change your immediate concerns? What concerns will be created? Will your decision's purpose be fulfilled? Which result do I think will happen?

Location: 377

That said, decision-making is not our goal—optimal decision-making combined with speed is. To improve the second portion—speed—we must understand the mental model of distinguishing between reversible and irreversible decisions and how it helps us take action more quickly.

Location: 389

Being able to tell the difference between reversible/irreversible decisions is one of the keys to speed. Add this to your decision-making analysis: how can I make this decision reversible, and what would it take? Can I do it? Then do that.

Blue highlight | Location: 394

That's because action will almost always tell you more than analysis before the fact.

Location: 398

Reversing a decision is rarely going back on your word; it's just adjusting your position in the face of new information. You'd be silly not to. Thus, make more reversible decisions.

Location: 403

Architect Wernher Von Braun had this to say on the matter: "One good test is worth a thousand expert opinions."

Location: 405

Knowing the difference between reversible and irreversible decisions can dictate the pace and momentum of your life. If you favor reversible decisions, you keep yourself always in motion and learning.

Location: 428

As mentioned, decision-making alone is not a difficult task. But if we want to make the best decision possible, we can go ahead and use reversible decisions to learn exactly what you need to know.

Location: 461

By contrast, the satisficer is just shooting to be satisfied and find an option that suffices for their purposes.

Location: 477

Most of our decisions are adequately made just by choosing an option that is reliable and honest.

Location: 482

There is nothing to truly be gained by maximizing your choice in peanut butter, and this is a truth that applies to 99% of our daily decisions. Otherwise, we are constantly overwhelmed and waste our mental bandwidth on maximizing where it doesn't matter and where there are massive diminishing returns.

Location: 502

A corollary to setting boundaries is to first decide upon a default choice up front if you can't decide within a set amount of time. The act of creating the default choice is important because you will have automatically selected something that fits your requirements or desires. You'll be happy in either case, in other words.

Location: 515

This is surprisingly similar to what former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell has to say on the matter. Powell has a mental model about making decisions and coming to a point of action no sooner than necessary yet no longer than necessary. He says that anytime you face a difficult decision, you should have no less than 40% and no more than 70% of the information you need to make that decision. In that range, you have enough information to make an informed choice but not so much intelligence that you lose your resolve and simply stay abreast of the situation. This makes you faster than more "informed" people and more informed than "fast" people. In a sense, it's the best of both worlds.

Location: 567

Regret is a powerful factor that might tell you more than all the positive sentiments in the world. It also forces you to think about the future you actually want, as opposed to the one you are currently heading toward. First, you must determine what you want from your life, and then you can tailor your decisions toward it.

Location: 605

Create an action bias for reversible decisions, as there is nothing to lose and only information and speed to gain.

Location: 607

Seek “Satisfaction.” This is a mixture of satisfy and suffice, and it is aiming to make decisions that are good enough, adequate, and serve their purpose.

Location: 611

Make a decision with no less than 40% of the information you need but no more than 70%. Anything less and you are just guessing; anything more and you are just wasting time.

Location: 727

The gambler’s fallacy is representative of a broader phenomenon known as apophenia, which is the human tendency to see patterns and connections through random data points, usually also coinciding with too few data points. This is why people see rabbits in clouds and elaborate scenes through inkblot tests.

Location: 738

There is no linear relationship between input and output.

Location: 748

How will you fare when you must constantly struggle? That’s the equilibrium where your true rate of improvement lies.

Location: 763

be like Goldilocks and find a zone of satisfaction.

Location: 820

“Black swan” events, equilibrium points, and regressions to the mean all obscured our thoughts because they are more emotional than realistic.

Location: 936

Darwin handled all this conflicting information responsibly. He genuinely considered material that might have disproved his assertions and took pains to fully absorb every single scenario, anomaly, and exception to his theories. He didn’t filter out information that didn’t support his beliefs; he was utterly immune to confirmation bias.

Location: 941

Of course, the Darwinian golden rule calls back to intellectual honesty and the maxim “strong opinions but held lightly.” It assumes intellectual humility: being unattached to any stances or theories and simply following the evidence.

Location: 966

Overall, Darwin's mental model is about one thing over all else: truth. Out of all the models in this book, this might be the one most neglected and abused of all.

Location: 1,066

The same tools and thought patterns won't work for everything, and mental models prove especially well-suited to solving problems because they provide literal guidelines about how to probe for solutions.

Location: 1,082

Outside of problem-solving, it's just a good mental model for life because it forces a certain amount of empathy for others. When you can step into other people's perspectives, you are encouraged to ask how it came about, how it's reasonable to them, and why it all fits together.

Location: 1,165

would get a broader range of the literature on dogs and loyalty. This particular stance does not have any consequences, but confirmation bias can also turn life-threatening.

Location: 1,170

The mental model of finding your own flaws applies in another important context: in relationships.

Location: 1,171

This particularly arises when you have conflict with someone else. But again, what if you were to shift gears and proactively seek to find your own flaws in your arguments and stances instead of defending them to the death? Instead, when you seek to find your own flaws in arguments, try to find what's known as the third story. The third story is what an objective bystander would say about the conflict. It would be ruthlessly objective and detached. You would probably not be pleased to hear it, and you would definitely not be found blameless or without fault.

Location: 1,179

Recognizing that your point of view may be imperfect is, in fact, usually the first part of solving a problem. It's a sign of strength and confidence, whereas dogged refusal to listen to another outlook is more frequently perceived as a sign of shakiness or weakness.

Location: 1,189

MM #15: Separate Correlation From Causation Use to understand what truly needs to be addressed to solve a problem.

Location: 1,207

People don't buy sunglasses as a direct result of ice cream purchases—they buy both when the summer heat hits them. Just because two things occur simultaneously doesn't mean there is a relationship between them.

Location: 1,232

In order to avoid that fallacy, one should identify as many potential factors as one can: research, study trends, gather more data, and make reasonable, unhurried judgments.

Location: 1,518

To find first principles, Musk goes through a short three-step process to blow past assumptions.

Location: 1,520

Identify and define current assumptions. These are things that appear to be givens or unable to change.

Location: 1,522

Break down the problem into its first principles.

Location: 1,525

Create new solutions from scratch.

Location: 1,594

Do you want to be more productive? Instead of asking yourself how to be more productive, ask yourself what sabotages your productivity and make it your goal to avoid those.

Location: 1,775

Each of you will have to figure out where your talent lies. And you'll have to use your advantages. But if you try to succeed in what you're worst at, you're going to have a very lousy career. I can almost guarantee it.

Location: 1,836

If the task is at 90% of the quality you need it to be, it's time to look around at what else needs your attention to bring it from 0% to 90%. In other words, it's far more helpful to have three tasks completed at 80% quality versus one task at 100% quality.

Location: 1,857

There is an easy path and a right path—often you'll find yourself on the right path if you just avoid the path of least resistance. Seek the resistance; seek the hardship, and rest assured that you are on the correct path. Chances are avoiding struggle will just lead you away from what you want.

Location: 1,865

Unfortunately, doing the right thing usually means doing the hard thing; actually, they are almost always the exact same thing, and that's what this mental model really recognizes.

Location: 1,919

The lasagna does not have a lasting benefit, but it does have a lasting cost. Resistance lies between you and what you want.

Location: 2,005

Murphy's Law is behind the fail-safes, backup plans, and contingency plans of our world. It reminds us to double-check, even when we're 99% sure about something.

Location: 2,038

Drawing from that original principle, Occam's Razor is often stated in present times as "The simplest explanation is usually the correct one" as well as "The more assumptions you have to make, the more unlikely that explanation is."

Location: 2,095

This mental model assumes simplicity in the realm of social interaction. If you presume that people only want to be good to you, it has the power to massively improve your relationships.

Location: 2,120

What matters in a book, anyway? In fiction, the plot and characters. In non-fiction, clear lessons. In any case, not what I was spending all of my time on. In any pursuit, only a few things really make the difference, and tinkering with the tiny things is usually a worthless pursuit.

Location: 2,369

change is not really a change; it's just a deviation. As such, it doesn't represent what will continue to happen in the future. A regression to the mean is when things settle back down and resume what they were doing before—this is representative of reality.

Location: 2,379

Instead of growing defensive when presented with something that opposed him, he grew critical and skeptical toward himself. This radical open-mindedness puts aside confirmation bias and ego.

Location: 2,428

Avoid the Path of Least Resistance. Does something appear too easy? It's too good to be true. Avoid it. Seek resistance, because that's a sign that you are on the right path. On a daily basis, we are faced with two choices: the easy thing and the right thing.