

DAN
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Best-selling author of *Flat Army* and *The Purpose Effect*

open to think

SLOW DOWN,
THINK CREATIVELY, AND
MAKE BETTER DECISIONS



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While it may not occur to us on a daily basis, there is a widespread cultural tendency toward quick decisions and quick action. This pattern has resulted in many of our society's greatest successes, but even more of its failures. Though the root cause is by no means malicious, we have begun to reward speed over quality, and the negative effects suffered in both our personal and professional lives are potentially catastrophic.

Best-selling author and Chief Envisioner Dan Pontefract offers the solution to this predicament with what he coins "Open Thinking," a cyclical process in which creativity is encouraged, critiquing leads to better decisions, and thoughtful action delivers positive, sustainable results. He proposes a return to balance between the three components of productive thought: dreaming, deciding, and doing.

Based on organizational and societal data, academic research, historical studies, and a wide range of interviews, Open to Think is an appeal for a world of better thinking. Pontefract introduces tangible, actionable strategies to improve the way we think as organizations and individuals.

More information at <http://www.opentothink.com>

Open to Think Details

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From Reader Review Open to Think for online ebook

Nancy says

Open to Think makes you think about your thinking processes. Dan defines three components of an Open Thinking model and then logically and thoughtfully examines each component. He takes you on an action-packed yet reflective journey through these Open Thinking components – Creative, Critical, and Applied – by outlining the inhibitors of each component and then relating relevant examples of the behaviors you can use to practice each component. A common inhibitor of Open Thinking in today's business environment is the perceived notion of “no time”. Dan offers practical advice to mitigate this inhibitor.

I really enjoyed the stories and interviews taken from a wide variety of people, organizations and the Nisga'a Nation. As a retired person, I appreciated the tips and/or questions at the end of each thinking component section being separated into “For the individual” and “For the organization”. This separation signaled to me that you can strive to be an Open Thinker at any age and at any stage of life.

Dan asks you to contemplate a number of pertinent questions throughout the book. I found the questions totally engaging.

Overall, the read was thought-provoking and informative, interwoven with heartfelt advice from a humble visionary leader who wants us to “slow down, think creatively, and make better decisions”. I truly hope Dan's concepts are embraced, as they are an excellent segue into his next project, Love-Based Leadership.

Barnabas says

Solid summary of the 3 steps of Open Thinking.

Dan makes a great summary and analogy of the fallacies of "Closed thinking" with the manually made popcorn example

- Indifferent - resulting in a Fire on the stove (without the popcorn popped),
- Inflexible - Hot oil and kernels, due to rushing in
- Indecisive - Burnt popcorn due to delaying decisions

On the other hand the Open thinking requires 3 other elements:

- Creative thinking (Dream),
- Critical thinking (Decide)
- Applied Thinking (Do)

So the mantra for Open Thinking becomes: Dream. Decide. Do. Repeat.

The book is full of business examples - one of which, a personal example from Dan was very memorable for me: In a team practice, a few teams had to build a paper tower for given specifications, but they were lacking some elements (each teams were lacking different items).

Out of 400 people - no one started the task by asking: Why don't we start collaborating with the other teams? This shows that people tend to apply competition, rather than collaboration instinctively.

On the creative thinking side he talks about Tom Hanks' character in Castaway, where he initially is a inflexible thinker (doing everything immediately), then becomes a creative thinker over time, by his own learnings.

Another example is John Lasseter of Pixar, who was initially fired from Disney when promoting computer animation - ...and ended up as Pixar's Chief, and Disney had purchased the successful company for 7.4 billion dollars in 2006.

As for Critical thinking we need to be able to weigh our alternatives and think not only about the immediate benefits of a decision, but long term consequences.

Some things We need to think through by ourselves - no Siri, Alexa or Google Assistant will make a decision for us.

In Applied thinking there is a great example of NASA's rigid push for launching the Challenger on time - resulting in 7 lost lives, just because they did not show any flexibility during the launch in spite of written protests from suppliers of the so called "O-rings".

Overall, a nicely written, easy to follow book, that emphasizes the need to

- set aside time to think on a regular basis,
- put this into our calendar and follow through without interruption.
- slow down before making a hasty decision, considering alternatives and long term consequences
- then execute with flexibility, if the situation changes.

Ceil says

While this book had a ratio of anecdote to insight that was too high for my taste, it's built, like all of Dan's books, around really important ideas. I love the things he cares about, the way he puts things together. Open to Think felt less substantive to me than the first two books in the trilogy - I'll be looking for the articles and presentations in which he crystallizes what looks like a very good model for reflection, application, and creativity, for thinking slow to think fast.
