

**Brief Summary of
Time to Think
Listening to ignite your mind**

Nancy Kline

- The quality of a person's attention determines the quality of other people's thinking
- Everything we do depends on the thinking we do first
- Our thinking depends on the quality of our attention to each other – the most important thing we could do is to listen to people expertly to give them attention respectfully they would begin to think for themselves, clearly and afresh

Why a thinking environment matters?

- A Thinking environment is the set of conditions under which people can think for themselves and think well together
- They make it possible for people's thinking to move further, go faster, plumb insights. Banish blocks and produce brand new ideas quickly

Thinking for yourself

- The 10 components of a thinking environment are
 - Attention – Listening with respect, interest and fascination
 - Incisive questions – removing assumptions that limit ideas
 - Equality – treat each other as thinking peers, giving equal turns and attention and keeping agreements and boundaries
 - Appreciation – practice a 5 to 1 ratio of appreciation to criticism
 - Ease – offering freedom from rush to urgency
 - Encouragement – moving beyond competition
 - Feelings - allowing sufficient emotional release to restore thinking
 - Information – providing a full and accurate picture of reality
 - Place – creating a physical environment that says back to people “You matter”
 - Diversity – adding quality because of the differences between us

Attention

- Attention the act of listening with respect and fascination is the key to a Thinking Environment
- Giving good attention to people makes them more intelligent
- To help people think for themselves, first listen. And listen. Then Listen. And just when they say they cannot think of anything else, you can ask them the questions – “What else you think about this?”
- The next time some one asks for your help with a problem, remember that the brain that contains the problem probably also contains the solution. Then set up conditions for them to find it
- Finishing people's sentences for them, or tailgating, is an insult. When you finish someone's sentence for them you are assuming that they cannot finish it themselves, that your words will be their words or better and that it won't hurt them

- The fact that the person can relax in the knowledge that you are not going to take over, talk, interrupt, manoeuvre or manipulate is one of the key reasons they can think so well around you
- Your face matters – it can determine where people dare venture. Do not try to frown or tighten, don't try to be artificial. Be yourself, truly interested, respectful and learn how to make your face show it
- “Keep your eyes on the eyes of the person thinking – no matter what. Don't look away even for a second. If there is a fire, I will let you know. Otherwise, unless you have a seriously unsavoury personal emergency, keep your eyes on their eyes”
- Infantilization is the act of treating someone (including children) like a child, deciding for them what is best, directing them assuming we know better than they do, worrying about them taking care of them. It is controlling them ourselves, king them dependent on us, requiring them to give over their thinking to us.
- Co-dependence is the addiction to pleasing people. You are co-dependent if you feel that you are dying if the person is made with you, you feel joy when the other person is happy, you exist in a pool of anxiety when you haven't heard from them. Co-dependent person makes a good listener – but not a good thinker
- Quiet – the fact that people have stopped speaking does not mean that they have stopped thinking. When people are quiet, they are busy, off on a solitary walk. And you have not been invited to come along
- Listening to the quiet - you will not know what they are thinking – but you will know that they are thinking

Incisive questions

- An incisive question, crafted with precision and lustre, is any question that removes limiting assumptions from your thinking so that you can think again. An Incisive question does this by replacing the limiting assumptions with a freeing one
- Incisive questions get your mind fired up again- they are simple. Don't make them complicated
- There are 3 kinds of assumptions – facts, possible facts and bedrock assumptions about the self and how life works
- You can identify your own assumptions and create your own Incisive questions to remove them
 - If you want to want to take action, but you are stuck, as yourself, “What am I assuming here that is stopping me? The answer might be “I am assuming that I don't deserve success here. Then remove it – *“If I knew that I do deserve success here, what do I do right now?”*”

Equality

- In a Thinking environment, everyone is valued equally as a thinker. Every one gets a turn to think aloud and a turn to listen
- Respect is a hall mark of a Thinking Environment. Equality is its base
- Staples, the office supply company, has institutionalized equality of thinking in the workplace by setting up a form for ideas meeting with all levels of staff on a bimonthly basis
- Two questions are posed

- What have you noticed that needs attention or change in this company that I may not have noticed?
- What do you think should be done about it?

Appreciation

- Appreciation keeps people thinking. When genuine, appreciation is important because it helps people to think for themselves on a cutting edge of an issue.
- Have a 10 to 1 ratio of appreciation to criticism – when you are paying attention to someone as they think, be sure to indicate with your face and eyes and sounds that you respect them, appreciate them as thinkers.
- Appreciation of someone needs to be genuine, succinct and concrete

Ease

- Ease is a presence defined by an absence.
- Urgency keeps people from thinking clearly. Ease sidesteps knots, disperses crises and lifts the cargo with a tip of its finger.
- Ease is a deceptively gentle catalyst. Ease creates, urgency destroys

Encouragement

- Competition in a thinking environment is hazardous. Competition between thinkers fractures your fortitude to ask the questions nobody wants asked. It keeps your attention on the rival not what you really think
- A Thinking environment sets up a wholehearted search for good ideas. In order for a person to be able to think that well, with that much freshness and mettle, they would need to be encouraged by the listener without smelling a bead of envy or competition from them
- When people are not competing with each other to be the best, it is possible to think all the way to something good

Feelings

- When people are trying to think for themselves, they just occasionally might cry or get angry or say they are frightened. Do not stop them – be with them. Pay respectful attention to them
- Improved thinking and behaviour are worth our listening through our feelings.

Information, Sometimes

- Accurate complete information is vital if people are going to think for themselves, clearly and loudly. Give information or ask for it – at the right time

Place

- Thinking environments are places that simply say back to the people – “you matter”
- When that is the guideline for architectural design and decoration, very different places emerge than when some abstract standard of opulence and furnishing is the guide or when pure functionality is the standard

Diversity

- Most of the decisions affecting the largest number of people in our society are made by homogenous groups.
- Diversity frees the mind of two limiting assumptions
 - That the dominant group is superior – so everyone should think like them
 - That because the dominant group is superior it should have the power over others
- Real diversity is achieved when groups are stripped of both those assumptions when differences are celebrated and when power lies in the hands of a truly mixed group. When real diversity emerges, a Thinking Environment does too

1. ATTENTION	Listening with palpable respect and without interruption
2. EQUALITY	Treating each other as thinking peers; Giving equal turns and attention; Keeping agreements and boundaries
3. EASE	Offering freedom from internal rush or urgency
4. APPRECIATION	Offering genuine acknowledgement of a person's qualities; Practicing a 5:1 ratio of appreciation to criticism
5. ENCOURAGEMENT	Giving courage to go to the cutting edge of ideas by moving beyond internal competition
6. FEELINGS	Allowing sufficient emotional release to restore thinking
7. INFORMATION	Supplying the facts; Dismantling denial
8. DIVERSITY	Welcoming divergent thinking and diverse group identities
9. INCISIVE QUESTIONS™	Removing assumptions that limit our ability to think for ourselves clearly and creatively
10. PLACE	Creating a physical environment that says back to people, "You matter"

Source: <https://www.coachingcultureatwork.com/wp-content/uploads/Nancy-Klines-Thinking-Environment.pdf>

Solitude

- Solitude is a human requirement. It is the only place where we are not attacked or belittled or overtaken.
- It is the best thinking environment because it does not reinforce the limiting assumptions that makes us think we cannot think.
- Solitude and attention are different routes to good thinking – we need them both

The thinking team

- Team effectiveness depends on the calibre of thinking a team can do. When teams know how to meet as Thinking Environment and how to exchange ideas one to one in this way and when they know how – they perform at increasingly high levels
- The most powerful vehicle for team thinking is the team meeting. A manager's ability to turn meetings into a Thinking Environment is probably an organization's greatest asset

Meeting this way

- Giving everyone a turn increases the intelligence of groups. Knowing that they won't be interrupted frees people to think faster and say less
- Simple guidelines for chairing great meeting include
 - Ask every one a turn to speak
 - Ask every one to say what is going well in their work or in their groups work
 - Give attention without interruption during open and even fiery discussions

- Ask Incisive Questions to reveal and remove assumptions that are limiting ideas
- Divide into Thinking Partnerships when thinking stalls and give each person five minutes to think out loud without interruption
- Go around intermittently to give every one a turn to say what they think
- Permit also the sharing of truth and information
- Permit the expression of feelings
- Ask everyone what they thought went well in the meeting and what they respect in each other
- Additional set of guidelines are
 - Give everyone a turn
 - Begin with positive reality – open your meeting by going round the group systematically twice to give everyone a turn to speak
 - Let them finish – get everyone to agree not to interrupt each other
 - Identify assumptions and ask incisive questions - Questions such as “What might we be assuming that could be limiting our thinking here?” “If we assumed something more freeing, what new ideas might we have?”
 - Divide into thinking pairs = divide the group into pairs and give each person to think uninterrupted for 5 mins with a partner’s undivided, respectful attention
 - Go round again – Give everyone a turn to speak again without interruption
 - Give permission to tell the truth – ensure a high ratio of appreciation, equality, certain amount of ease, a culture of listening with respect, permission to feel and sharing of truthful information
 - Allow people’s feelings – take time to hear from everyone, taking time to face reality
 - End with a positive turn – first reflect positively on the meeting, then appreciate each other

Timed talk

- Timed talk is a way to have a fight in a thinking environment – or rather it is away to not have a fight
- It is away to keep thinking when the tension is fierce, disagreement is solid and all you want is to win
- Each one taking turns to vent out grievances set to a timer of 3 minutes – no interruptions, take as many turns as necessary to resolve the issue – stop talking the moment the timer goes off
- It is also important to keep eye contact with the other person, focus on finding a good idea, avoid saying things you will regret later
- Timed talk process is not just for fights – it progresses ideas

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