Fostering Success through Goal-Focused Leadership
Sara Jansen Perry, PhD, Lars U. Johnson, PhD, L.A. Witt, PhD, and Daniel P. McDonald, PhD

How Screen Time Affects Sleep and Work Performance
Haiyang Liu, PhD, Yueting Ji, PhD, and Scott B. Dust, PhD

Reducing Social Anxiety to Boost Sales Performance
Bruno Lussier, PhD, Matthew Philp, PhD, Nathaniel N. Hartmann, PhD, and Heiko Wieland, PhD

Making the Brand-to-Customer Relationship Work
Claudio Alvarez, PhD, Danielle J. Brick, PhD, and Susan Fournier, PhD

INSIDER: Sales Secrets
Isabella Ip, MBA Candidate

INSIDER: Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don’t Know
Tyler O'Mary, MBA Candidate
As humans, our tendency is to cling to our beliefs. This occurs every single day with religious beliefs, political views, and even minuscule things like the correct way to tie a shoe. Arguments arise; people even start to despise each other just because they have opposing stances on various topics. A stubborn mindset can damage relationships between friends, family, and coworkers, unless people change the way they approach disagreements. This change involves shifting mindsets, rethinking stances, and unlearning old habits. Throughout history, the need for this shift has occurred even with the most intelligent people. Wilbur and Orville Wright fought and argued constantly, and when they opened their mind to others’ ideas, they developed the first airplane. Steve Jobs initially shut down the idea of adding the iPhone to Apple’s products because he thought it would cannibalize their computer products. It wasn’t until employees worked for months to convince him that he let them build a prototype. The world’s most famous people would not have been as successful—they might not have even made history—if they never rethought their views and stances.

In *Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don’t Know*, Adam Grant explains that “thinking again” can help you find new solutions to old problems, spot problems that were not addressed in old solutions, and may even help you change the world. Because change is constant, if we don’t adapt to it, we’ll fall behind everyone else. The process of beginning to think again starts with ourselves, then our interactions with others, and finally plans for the future. If you want to maximize your potential for success in your life and your career, the art of rethinking needs to be utilized every single day.

**THINK POINT #1: Individual Rethinking**

Old habits die hard. People form opinions and cling to them as tight as they can. As we think and talk about these opinions, we often fall into the mindsets of three different professions: preachers, politicians, and prosecutors. We preach when our sacred beliefs are in jeopardy; we deliver speeches to protect and promote our ideas; and we enter prosecutor mode when we recognize flaws in others’ opinions. To open our minds, Grant recommends we think like those in a fourth profession: scientists. A scientist is forced to rethink everything. They are expected to doubt everything and be curious about what they don’t know. The best way to open our minds to
new ideas is to doubt everything we think we already know and embrace the joy of being wrong, as failure is an opportunity for growth. When you realize you are wrong, don’t be embarrassed or get discouraged; instead, learn from mistakes and use that new knowledge to improve yourself.

One way to implement the joy of being wrong is by inviting others to question your thinking. Instead of getting into a heated argument that will lead to no change, approach it with the scientist mindset. Truly listen to what others have to say, learn something new, and don’t shy away from constructive criticism or new evidence.

THINK POINT #2: Interpersonal Rethinking

Whether it is selling a property, helping clients secure financing, or even confronting coworkers, to be successful in this industry, it is important to have strong communication skills. Approaching arguments with a scientist mindset doesn’t always mean you will or even should change your mind. Sometimes the other person is wrong, and for that case, Grant introduces a strategic game plan.

First, ask better questions and implement the art of persuasive listening by increasing the number of questions you ask and decreasing the number of statements. By asking the right questions, you can help another person come to your opinion on their own. Ask how instead of why, ask what evidence is needed to change their mind, and ask how they formed their initial opinion. These questions will help the other person think about where their opinions are rooted and if they are well-supported by facts and evidence.

Second, approach a disagreement as a dance, not a battle. Battles include two opposing sides that, as they fight, will continue to believe their original opinions. Dances take two sides working together. To start this dance of a disagreement, find and acknowledge the common ground between the two sides. Admitting points of convergence doesn’t show weakness; rather, it shows you are willing to negotiate, which will motivate the other side to do the same. Also, remember that less is more in a disagreement. Don’t pile on fact after fact, as doing so can make your audience defensive and cause them to reject your opinion based on the weakest points. Instead, choose your strongest argument—one that will be the most convincing.

THINK POINT #3: Collective Rethinking

Encourage an environment where your team takes the scientist mindset and is willing to listen with an open mind. Practice having more nuanced conversations with your team, fostering a learning culture, and staying open to rethinking the future. There are always more than two sides to every story, so instead of thinking “right or wrong,” embrace the idea that every opinion is like a prism with many lenses.
Create learning cultures by questioning the validity of established best practices and creating psychological safety. With the constantly changing marketplace, what may have been the ideal routines in the past may not be successful in the future. We can abandon best practices by allowing people to implement their innovative ideas (with test runs beforehand); however, some won’t feel confident to challenge the past routines if they don’t feel safe enough. Psychological safety starts with humble leaders who do not discourage people when they fail.

Lastly, be open to rethinking the future. Throw out the ten-year plan because life (and your plans for it) are ever evolving. Planning just one step ahead, and not one hundred, can keep you open to rethinking. Constantly doubt your opinions and what you think you know, allow yourself to learn from others, and foster a learning culture.

**Real Estate Implications**

The art of rethinking is imperative in real estate, as it allows your team to innovate and create a safe learning culture within your company. You never know when someone has an idea (but is too scared to say it) that could drastically change your firm, so allow people to embrace their creativity. The real estate market is constantly evolving, so when you open your mind to the idea of rethinking, you allow yourself and your team to become more successful than ever.

**Recommended Reading**


**About the Author**

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Tyler O’Mary is a graduate student from Austin, Texas. He earned his Bachelor of Business Administration from Baylor University with a double major in Finance and Entrepreneurship and Corporate Innovation. Tyler is currently pursuing an MBA at Baylor and plans to pursue a career in the commercial real estate industry.