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# 10 Commandments of a Thinking Environment, 'Time To Think', Nancy Kline (1999)

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| 1. **Attention** | **Attention is an act of creation -** *The quality of our attention determines the quality of other people's thinking.* Attention, driven by the promise of no interruption, and by respect and interest in where people will go with their thinking, is the key to a Thinking Environment. Attention is that powerful. It generates thinking. It is an act of creation. |
| 2. **Equality** | Even in a hierarchy people can be **equal as thinkers** - In a Thinking Environment everyone is valued equally as a thinker. Everyone gets a turn to think out loud and a turn to give attention. *To know you will get your turn to speak makes your attention more genuine and relaxed.* It also makes your speaking more succinct.<br><br>Equality keeps the talkative people from silencing the quiet ones. And it requires the quiet ones to contribute their own thinking. The result is high quality ideas and decisions. |
| 3. **Ease** | *Ease creates; urgency destroys* - But **Ease**, particularly in organisations and through the 'push' aspect of social networking, is being systematically bred out of our lives. If we want people to think well under impossible deadlines and inside the injunctions of 'faster, better, cheaper, more,' we must cultivate internal ease. Ease, an internal state free from rush or urgency, creates the best conditions for thinking. |
| 4. **Appreciation** | *The human mind works best in the presence of appreciation -* In life we learn that to be **appreciative** is to be naïve, whereas to be critical is to be realistic. In discussions, therefore, we focus first, and sometimes only, on things that are not working. Consequently, because the brain requires appreciation to work well, our thinking is often specious (shallow). The Thinking Environment recognizes the right ratio of appreciation to challenge so that individuals and groups can think at their best. |

# Time to Think (cont.)

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| **5. Encouragement** | To be 'better than' is not necessarily to be 'good' - To compete does not ensure certain excellence. It merely ensures comparative success. Therefore, competition between thinkers can be dangerous. It can keep their attention on each other as rivals, not on the huge potential for each to think courageously for themselves. A Thinking Environment prevents internal competition among colleagues, replacing it with *a wholehearted, unthreatened search for good ideas.* |
| 6. **Feelings** | Unexpressed **feelings** can inhibit good thinking - Thinking stops when we are upset. But if we express feelings just enough, thinking re-starts. Unfortunately, we have this backwards in our society. We think that when feelings start, thinking stops. When we assume this, we interfere with exactly the process that helps a person to think clearly again. *If instead, when people show signs of feelings, we relax and welcome them, good thinking will resume.* |
| 7. **Information** | Full and accurate **information** results in intellectual integrity. *Recognizing our collective social context creates psychological safety.* Facing what we have been denying leads to better thinking - We base our decisions on information all of the time. When the information is incorrect or limited, the quality of our thinking suffers. Whereas, accurate and full information provides the path to good independent thinking. Similarly, **dismantling denial** is often the first step to independent thinking. |
| 8. **Difference** | The greater the **diversity** of the group, and the greater the welcoming of different points of view, the greater the chance of accurate, cutting-edge thinking - Reality is diverse. Therefore, to think well we need to be in as *real*, as *diverse*, a setting as possible. *We need to be surrounded by people from many identity groups, and we need to know that there will be no reprisal for thinking differently from the rest of the group.* |

# Time to Think (cont.)

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| **9. Incisive Questions** | A wellspring of good ideas lies just beneath an untrue **limiting assumption**. An Incisive Question will remove it, freeing the mind to think afresh.<br><br>The key block to high-quality independent thinking is an untrue limiting assumption, lived as true. |
| 10. **Place** | When the physical environment affirms our importance, we think more clearly and boldly. *When our bodies are cared for and respected, our thinking improves*<br><br>Thinking Environments are places that say back to people, 'You matter.' People think at their best when they notice that the place reflects their value to the people there... And because the first place of thinking is the body, it needs to be in a condition that says to us as thinkers, 'You matter'. |