Notebook - Distancing

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Marquet, L. David, Gillespie, Michael

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> requires more than just information; it demands the ability to step back—to distance oneself from the emotions, biases, and noise that cloud judgment.

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> Distancing, a concept that might initially seem abstract, is rendered actionable through tangible tools and real-world examples.

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> slowing down to create space for deeper thinking. As they show, the pause is not an interruption but a powerful tool for clarity and creativity.

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> When excited, stressed, or threatened, we are pushed further into a state of self-immersion, a closed-in feeling of me-here-and-now, which narrows, filters, and distorts what we see, reinforcing our previously held beliefs.

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> companies that wanted to transform from leader-follower to leader-leader organizations, where the governing principle is to push authority to those with the information, not push information to those with the authority. This enabled teams to get the work done with high standards and significant autonomy while also aligning toward world-class performance.

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> If he asked a few questions—for example, What would you do if you were me? or What do you think the future you six months from now wishes you would do today?—they would immediately see clearly and arrive at better decisions. His clients were particularly interested in how this reframing improved decision-making.

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> we can intentionally choose to exit self-immersion and take a distanced perspective.

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> We need to step away from the problem and remove ourselves from the situation so we're able to look at it objectively—the way a coach might—and decide what to do.

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> psychological distancing that enables you to exit your me-here-and-now self. Drawing on compelling scientific research, we explain why it works so well, and we show you three ways to do it: self-distancing, spatial distancing, and temporal distancing. First, you can be someone else, inhabiting another's perspective. This activates the neutral observer's outside point of view. Second, you can be somewhere else. You zoom out and see yourself from afar, as just another person who is part of a larger context. Third, you can be sometime else, imagining that you are your future self who is thinking back to what you wish you had done today.

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> Because we view ourselves and our worlds through
>
> the eyes of our own egos, our perceptions are often
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> biased in ways that flatter ourselves.

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> the more you think about yourself, the worse you feel, and that the antidote to social anxiety is to focus on other people instead. In other words, get out of your own head.

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> In his book The Righteous Mind, social psychologist Jonathan Haidt calls ego our "in-house press secretary."5 When engaged, ego is our built-in defender and promoter, with one agenda: to make us look good and feel good about ourselves.

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> We focus on a string of inputs that convinces us we are right. This is called confirmation bias.

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> We double down on our past actions and choices because we have incorporated them into our identity. This is the sunk-cost fallacy, in which we refuse to veer from a strategy or action once it' s already underway because we feel invested in it. We are prone to this escalation of commitment to a failing course of action.

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> It's all part of a misguided pattern of behavior that protects us from all manner of perceived threats. This is a real problem with deadly consequences. A study by Carnegie Mellon's Binyamin Cooper and colleagues measured the effects of rudeness on anchoring.

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> Like physical pain, social pain is sensed and passed to the brain for action.

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> our brains process social pain in a way that looks similar to how our brains process physical pain.

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> With social pain, we can both recall the situation and reexperience the hurt. So, we're further motivated to protect ourselves from social pain.

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> Self-Immersion Is Our Default

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> our minds curate reality, highlighting our wins and minimizing our losses.

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> If we got kicked out and the board brought in a
>
> new CEO, what do you think he would do? —ANDY GROVE TO GORDON MOORE

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> Moore and Grove were paralyzed. They maintained the status quo—in essence, deciding by not deciding.

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> They dispelled the social threat and the threat to their identity by removing the oldest and most persistent barrier to seeing the situation clearly: themselves.

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> The distanced self is not preoccupied with image preservation but is focused on the task.

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> if we are present in the moment while being self-immersed, we can lose sight of the bigger picture, unnecessarily restrict our freedom of choice, fail to notice we are passively deciding, or just plain make the wrong decision.

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> psychological distance. The science at play here draws from construal level theory (CLT),

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> Lower levels of construal result in thinking concretely about details and how to do something. Higher levels of construal result in thinking abstractly about principles and what, whether, or why we do something.

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> Greater psychological distance invites higher levels of construal.

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> It's not that a higher or lower level of construal is better; it's that we need to match our level of construal to what we are trying to do. Making a decision? Invoke a higher level of construal for perspective and distance. Need project progress? Then get practical with a lower level of construal.

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> the human bias known as temporal discounting. This means that as time moves forward, each additional increment of time starts to matter less and less. For example, the difference between now and a week from now feels much bigger than between fifty-two and fifty-three weeks from now, even though the time distance is the same in both scenarios.

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> Self-distance, similar to social distance from a social-psychological perspective, refers to taking a perspective that is not our own, such as when Moore and Grove took the perspective of their replacements. Spatial distance refers to taking a position physically removed from us in space, such as imagining (or viewing) what the earth looks like from the moon, or seeing our own yard from the perspective of our neighbor's. By manipulating who, where, and when, we create (or reduce) psychological distance, with greater distance leading to higher levels of thought abstraction.

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> Detailed, in-the-moment execution of the how is necessary—for instance, when hiking along a trail with a steep drop-off, we want to pay attention to our foot placement, or when pushing through the execution phase of a large project, we want to focus on the details of each stage.

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> Moore and Grove imagined they were their replacements. We can imagine we are any number of personas—a beloved former boss, a trusted colleague, a supportive parent, a best friend. However, over and over, we have come back to what we've found to be an extremely accessible, powerful,

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> and effective persona: Coach. The Distanced Self as Coach

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> Coaches are not teachers, but they teach. They're not your boss—in professional tennis, golf, and skating, the athlete hires and fires the coach—but they can be bossy. They don't even have to be good at the sport. The famous Olympic gymnastics coach Bela Karolyi couldn't do a split if his life depended on it. Mainly, they observe, they judge, and they guide.8

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> First, as Coach, we are not us. We are someone else. This activates psychological distance and the neutral observer perspective. Second, as Coach, we are somewhere else. We are physically displaced from the field of play. From the sidelines, we see ourselves as just one player in a complex environment involving many others. Third, as Coach, we can also go sometime else. We activate our inner time traveler. We more clearly assess past actions and future options. The focus is on what comes next.

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> For there is no such flatterer as is a man's self;
>
> and there is no such remedy against flattery of
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> a man's self, as the liberty of a friend. —SIR FRANCIS BACON

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> the evidence suggests that most leaders lose effectiveness with time. In other words, they become part of the problem.

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> This is "playing not to lose" rather than "playing to win."

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> increased commitment to the paradigm develops based on three main factors: previous investment, visibility, and longevity.

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> HOW-TO 1: Become your replacement. Let's say you have a decision you've been grappling with. Walk out of the room. Now become someone else. Imagine you are your own replacement. Leave your tenure, your role, your attachments behind. You know little of the company and less about why things are done the way they are. You have no attachment to any particular policies or products. Settled into your new identity? Now walk back in. What would you now do differently?

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> HOW-TO 2: Start fresh. You can try this too. The next time you go on vacation, give yourself a full reset. A week might be enough. You could also work temporarily in a different department. Some companies will deliberately rotate people in different functions to create this sense of newness or offer sabbaticals to employees so they can gain a new perspective to bring back to their craft. When you come back, deliberately return to work as if you were someone else, starting anew. Take note of your observations.

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> In politics, long-serving autocrats harden in their positions; politicians on both sides of the aisle get trapped in their own echo chambers. This is why there is such wisdom in term limits. The longer the tenure, the more the environment of those in power begins to reflect their own self-immersed condition.

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> Reorganizations are especially challenging to execute well because they are fraught with emotion, and people are motivated to preserve power, the status quo, and one's sense of identity and community. To circumvent these natural human tendencies, General Merz instructed the planning team, and then the entire organization, to imagine that they did not know where or who they would be after the reorganization, in an effort to break these tribal allegiances and assumptions. This concept is called the "veil of ignorance," credited to philosopher John Rawls, who suggested thinking about the construction of societal structures and institutions from the ground up, instead of modifying existing ones.

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> HOW-TO 3: Try on the veil of ignorance. If you are responsible for a major organizational change such as a reorganization, invite the team to view the planning from the perspective of a person who has no knowledge of the existing structure and no departmental or tribal allegiances within the organization. Have them focus on the effectiveness of the organization as a whole. Perpetuate this message. HOW-TO 4: Get an outside take. Another good time to exit your immersed self is during a performance evaluation or annual review. These situations tend to be emotional and invite people to become defensive, reducing the effectiveness of the activity and introducing resentment. If someone else were looking at what you or your team did, what would they have to say?

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> the information asymmetry between how we see ourselves and how we see others, including the conflict and disagreement that result from this perceptual gap.5 Information asymmetry means we know different things about others than we do about ourselves. We judge ourselves based on our intentions, which we know but they do not, and we judge others based on their behaviors, which we can see clearly but they cannot. Our

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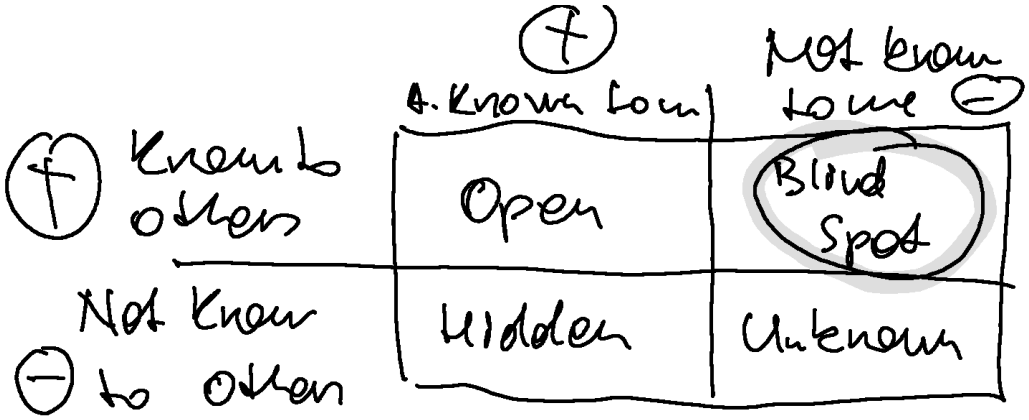
> This difference is elegantly illustrated through a classic tool called the Johari Window. Named after the two psychologists who developed it (Joseph Luft and Harrington Ingham), the Johari Window is a 2 × 2 table that crosses (A) what I know about myself and (B) what I don't know about myself, with (1) what others know about me and (2) what others don't know about me. One cell of this table is of particular interest: the blind spot (B1). These are things that I don't know about myself but that others know about me.

Note:



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> On any team, we are biased to think that we have contributed more to the outcome than we actually have.

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> The reason is more benign: We simply see what we do and not what others do.

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> One method the researchers of the original overclaiming study found to mitigate our biased recollection of our own contributions is to prime people to think first of something their partner (or coworker) did before estimating their own contribution. Beginning by thinking from the other person's perspective helps people exit their immersed state in a small way, thereby enabling them to see their own contributions more accurately. HOW-TO 5: Consider the contribution of others first. So, the next time you're concerned about how much you've contributed to developing a proposal, delivering a project, or cleaning the house, first, take the perspective of the other person and consider what they did to contribute. Then proceed to estimate your own contribution.

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> Overestimation of our talents or knowledge and underestimation of others' leads to a slew of issues. For example, we overestimate our chances of success and underestimate the chances of others in risky projects, like starting a new business. We also overestimate how much we know someone from a brief interaction but underestimate how well someone knows us.

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> Fundamentally, we rely on a host of biases and distortions that help us see ourselves as more benevolent and internally consistent than we really are.

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> HOW-TO 6: Ask for the evidence. Pick one of your committed self-views. Now imagine you are someone else who has the opportunity to observe your behavior frequently. Then, as this person, ask, "What is the evidence that image is true?" and "What is the evidence that image is not true?"

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> HOW-TO 7: Yellow-card me! When you want to get better at something or change your behavior, your internal dialogue will try to convince you that you've already done so. You tell yourself that you have broken the old habit and are already doing the new one. But it's a deception. One way to avoid this self-deceiving ruse is to invite other people to "yellow-card" you. They can physically hold up a yellow card (like in soccer), they can give you a ticket (like from a roll of raffle tickets), or to really help you take the point, they can fine you a nominal amount (like ten dollars). Choose people you can openly share your goals with, who are on your side and supportive but not afraid of telling you what you might not want to hear. The behavior could be something like listening fully or recognizing a job well done, anything that you genuinely want to work on.

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> The fact is that we all feel justified in these actions until we're forced to see them through someone else's eyes.

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> HOW-TO 8: Create the rubric for yourself. Before diving into a project or activity, imagine yourself as Coach and be clear about what you are trying to achieve. How would you know you met your goals? Write them down. Create your own grading criteria. Then set that aside and go to work. At the end, step out of the work and look back at Coach's previously determined goals and evaluate Mike's work.

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> When we imagine ourselves as someone else, we access the strengths of that alter ego and break out of any self-consciousness and attachments to our prior decisions. But in order to apply this effect to our everyday life, we need to capture this perspective and carry it into our day-to-day reality or, at the very least, to the decision we're currently facing. It's simple enough to say "be someone else" or become Coach, but it helps to have a concrete idea of who we become to be "not me."

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> loss aversion, which causes us to value things we own more than those we don't. For example, it hurts more to lose twenty dollars we had than it pleases us to find a twenty-dollar bill. This bias is the source of multiple distortions in our decision-making, from escalation of commitment to quitting

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> too late.

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> “What everybody needs is the friend who really loves them but does not care much about hurt feelings in the moment.”

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> We are more likely to see the problems in other people’s actions and decisions than our own.

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> “Solomon’s paradox”—great wisdom when it comes to the affairs of others, but foolishness when it comes to one’s own decisions.13

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> Coach does not need to be a specific real person or persons but sure could be inspired by one.

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> The point is that Coach isn’t you. So, anyone who is not you is an improvement.

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> HOW-TO 9: Choose the form Coach takes. Think of a decision you are facing. For this specific situation, choose who you want to become as Coach. Mentally inhabit that persona. What does Coach see? What questions does Coach have? What would Coach advise? What would Coach say is the most important thing to focus on? Write down the answers to all these questions. Then return to yourself and execute.

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> Our prescription is for you to become someone else temporarily to gain the distance, perspective,

> and clarity necessary to make a big decision. Then go back to being yourself and execute on that decision, with the increased perspective afforded by Coach's distance. How to Become Coach 1. Become your replacement. When you have a decision to make, imagine you are your replacement, like Moore and Grove did. 2. Start fresh. After a vacation, work anniversary, or period away from your current position, return to work with fresh eyes. 3. Try on the veil of ignorance. For an organizational change effort, apply a veil of ignorance—for you and for your team. 4. Get an outside take. During a review, consider what a team looking at your team's performance would take away from it. 5. Consider the contribution of others first. View the other person's contributions from their perspective before estimating your own contribution. 6. Ask for the evidence. Become someone else and objectively consider the evidence that your self-beliefs are true. 7. Yellow-card me! When you want feedback on your own behavior or are trying to change a habit, invite someone you trust to yellow-card you. 8. Create the rubric for yourself. Become Coach to create the rubric for your own task. Apply the rubric. 9. Choose the form Coach takes. Exit yourself and inhabit this form. Make the decision from Coach's perspective, and then return to yourself to execute. Summary The point of becoming Coach is not to stop listening to any other coaches or mentors you may already have in your life. Instead, it's to recognize that, more often than not, you have the answers to the big questions inside you already. You just can't see them because you are too self-immersed. It's like you're looking through the periscope in one direction on high power mode, while the answers lie in another. Coach ensures you've got the right sight. Coach is supportive. Coach has a plan. Not just a tactical plan but a strategic plan. Coach remains calm, collected, and supportive when you get discouraged, agitated, or angry, when you're prone to doing something self-destructive, or when you're just not living up to your best self.

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> Simone, chill. Sit down. We're not doing it. —SIMONE BILES, ON QUITTING
>
> THE 2020 OLYMPICS

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> child, his father would habitually tell him that whenever he had a problem he should: "Ask yourself the question."

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> More often than not, when people spoke to themselves, they tended to dwell on past injustices,

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> stoking negative emotions and magnifying distress. The result was emotional fragility, compromised decisions, damaged relationships, and undermined performance.

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> In psychological experiments, unprepared public speaking is a surefire way to induce stress in participants.

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> Kross's research found that most of us rarely take advantage of illeism to activate this distanced approach, particularly when reflecting on a previous event, especially an unpleasant one. We tend to relive (Kross uses recount) the experience from the first-person, self-immersed perspective over and over again. This results in reexperiencing stress on repeat, digging that mental rut even further, and reducing the likelihood of seeing the event in a new light. There are negative long-term consequences of this continued rehashing, such as greater susceptibility to emotional hijacking, vulnerability to recurring negative thoughts, and increased rumination.

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> This simple linguistic exercise is one of the easiest ways to exit the immersed me-here-and-now perspective. Replace the singular first-person pronouns we use to describe ourselves, I, me, and my, with the third person: for example, your name, he, she, or they. It works because when we write or talk about ourselves as if we were someone else, we feel like we are someone else.

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> Thinking, speaking, and writing about ourselves in the second or third person creates an automatic distancing, a self-reflection that we would otherwise be less likely to access.

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> When I talk to myself in the third person, it's much easier for me to realize I'm being an emotional wreck. When I'm just like, oh my God, everybody hates me. I did this. Instead, I say OK, let's be the observer. I'm now managing me. I'm the director. I'm looking at this employee who happens to be me. That, for me, is what being the observer is. That's what I teach clients. It's not like it's some big pie in the sky thing. Just pretend you're talking to yourself in third person. "Wait, Jennifer's really

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> acting emotional right now. I wonder if this is a good decision for her to respond like this."

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> HOW-TO 1: Hey, [your name]. As you muse over a tough decision, reflect on the situation using your own name. You'll notice that something immediately changes. When you talk to yourself using your own name, it's like the person talking automatically becomes not you, freeing you from any mental and emotional baggage. Illeism showcases the simple yet incredible power of language—verbal or written—to help us reframe a situation with the advantage of a clearer and elevated perspective.

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> studies show that psychological distancing through illeism, or the use of the third-person perspective, actually helps you make healthier food choices throughout the day.

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> you could tape a note on the refrigerator, REMEMBERING THEIR HEALTH GOALS, WHAT WOULD [YOUR NAME] WANT TO EAT? and then make a choice.

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> "I live a fuller, more active life by eating healthy."

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> HOW-TO 2: Coach makes the call. As Coach, make the choice about what to eat once or about going to the gym just once. If you recontemplate the decision to drive to the gym after work or at each turn on the way home, you'll end up skipping the gym because it takes only one of those multiple opportunities to send you home. Outsource the decision to Coach and stick to it. Coach (you, as Coach) writes the plan. Later, you (as yourself) execute it. You can even write the plan in advance. In the case of a workout routine, if you commit to just following the plan, no further decisions are required.

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> When we are self-immersed, it is easy to become self-righteous. We can even feel this on a visceral level.

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> The cardiovascular system of the immersed-self group looked like it was responding to a threat.

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> In contrast, the cardiovascular system of the distanced-self group looked like it was responding to a challenge.

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> HOW-TO 3: Get psyched. Prepare for a stressful event using illeism. Write it out or say it in your head. Allow the distanced perspective to offer you a sense of calm. That person you're talking about now has an opportunity to rise to the challenge. It is not threatening; it is an exciting opportunity. Distanced self-talk also helps reduce stress because it removes some of the emotional baggage that tends to cloud thinking, decreasing performance.

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> practice journaling in the third person for some of his classes.

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> "It helps cut through the BS because we lie to ourselves."

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> HOW-TO 4: Dear Diary. Use the illeist diary method to write about your day, a decision you have to make, something that's bothering you, or an opportunity you might have in the near or distant future. This is writing about yourself in second or third person, as though you have become someone else, Coach. No I, me, or my. Use [your name], he, she, or they. Try this exercise a few times a week so it begins to feel natural. If you already journal every day, start incorporating an illeism segment. You'll be able to take Coach's point of view more easily in time, giving you the

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> power to get outside your own head.

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> HOW-TO 5: Address yourself as you. This actually helps for an in-the-moment performance boost to get over your stress and see the situation as a challenge to rise to—not a threat to escape. Become Coach and offer yourself encouragement: “You can do it.” “You’re doing great.” “You’re pacing yourself well.” “You’ve got a good rhythm.” “You are feeling relaxed.”

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> How to Talk Like Coach

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> Hey, [your name]. When you’re in a stressful situation, address yourself by name the way Coach or a friend would. 2. Coach makes the call. When you need to make a decision, become Coach to make the call, and then advise [your name] to do it. 3. Get psyched. Before a stressful event, step out of the “I thinking” and deliberately write or talk to yourself about it in the third person to calm your nerves. 4. Dear Diary. Write in a journal using the third person (she, he, they, or your name) to gain perspective, objectivity, and accountability. 5. Address yourself as you. When encouraging yourself in performance mode, use the second-person you or your name rather than the first-person I. Summary Our default state is the immersed me-here-and-now perspective. Linguistically, this state is reflected in language where we refer to ourselves in the first person, using I and me. This immersed state biases us toward a myopic, threatened, defensive, egocentric perspective that creates a host of issues. When we use language Coach would use to talk to us, or that we would use to encourage and support another person, we promote psychological distancing. Distanced talk, even distanced self-talk, invites psychological distance. Distance results in a more open, curious, challenge-seeking mindset that shapes all facets of life, positively impacting learning, decision-making, task performance, relationships, and overall satisfaction.

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> Imagine you’re negotiating on a stage and part of your mind goes to a mental and emotional balcony, a place of calm, perspective, and self-control. —WILLIAM URY, COMMENCEMENT SPEECH AT DAWSON COLLEGE1

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> The worst feeling, he says, does not come from losing but from not playing the best game we know we are capable of.

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> He describes how creating distance between himself and the negotiation works: In the heat of the moment, he likes to take a pause mentally and imagine he's on a balcony, looking down at the negotiations, rather than sitting in his chair at the negotiation table.2

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> "Part of your mind goes to a mental and emotional balcony, a place of calm, perspective, and self-control where you can stay focused on your interests, keep your eyes on the prize."

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> HOW-TO 1: Become Balcony Boy. You can do this too. Try it before heading into a stressful situation. Maybe the competition is goading you, critical voices in your head are beating up on you, or you are dug in to a particular position in an argument. Go to the balcony. Do this during a pause in the action—before your performance, before you are up to bat. Take a mental walk onto the balcony and observe yourself from there. You should feel more at ease, focused simply on the task, undistracted by your image, with a calm mix of playfulness, determination, and possibility. Mental teleportation of this type is an underused human superpower.

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> However, past events are just that—in the past. They happened and cannot be undone. Acknowledgment is appropriate, but letting them continue to negatively affect our lives only furthers the pain. Distance, acknowledge, decide to accept, and move on.

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> spatial self-distancing consistently shows that people experience less negative emotion, including anger and depression, and are less likely to rehash painful events.

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> HOW-TO 2: Be a fly on the wall. When thinking about a past event that is emotionally troubling, consider it from a distanced perspective. Use this tool anytime you relive the same negative experience more than once, without gaining any understanding or the ability to get over it. Step back and move away from the situation, so that you're observing it from the perspective of a fly on the wall. Watch the event happen to the distant you. As a bonus, try to understand the emotions your distant self is experiencing and why that person feels that way. This will help you reconstrue the event in a manner that enables you to gain understanding and move forward.

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> HOW-TO 3: Observe [your name's] behavior. You can ask yourself a lot of the same types of questions Pierce asked Dr. Carson. Consider adding a twist: Present them to yourself in the third person. Here are some questions to get you started. You probably have a few of your own to add. When possible, focus the questions on specific behaviors. When does [your name] get to work? How does [your name] feel when they get there? When does [your name] actually start working? What does that mean? What does [you name] do before they begin working? How does [your name] interact and communicate with other people? If someone were to observe [your name], what would they see? What does [your name] spend most of their time doing? Which activities are most important? How does [your name] feel at the end of the workday? What thoughts preoccupy their mind? Author James Clear talks about the power of observation in his bestseller Atomic Habits.7 Observation is a key starting point for identifying bad habits, eventually breaking them, and forging good habits instead. It all starts by observing yourself as though you're watching someone else.

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> His coach did what great coaches do, acting as his "external eyes and ears providing a more accurate picture of reality."

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> HOW-TO 4: Watch your game tapes. Recall your day. You are seeking objective information and evidence. Watch the scenes as Coach and give yourself the necessary feedback, whether good, bad, or ugly. If Coach could observe your paper trail or digital footprints for the day, what story would they tell? Remember, Coach is supportive but objective. Coach is not concerned about why your arm is entering the water in a certain way or why you go straight for the snack cabinet when you get home from work. Coach just sees the behavior clearly and dispassionately. Then coach yourself on what to do instead.

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> it's not about your image. It's not about you. It's about the task, the situation, the decision you are facing.

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> If you find yourself thinking about how you look or what others might think of you, you're doing it wrong.

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> the "overview effect." From space, we look small, insignificant. Our problems seem like mere blips.

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> By observing from the balcony, we can better accept the necessary feedback to improve our performance—even if, and according to this study, especially if, it is negative.

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> Spatial distancing enables us to take advantage of negative feedback by helping us to not feel defensive, allowing us to learn more.

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> for feedback relative to ideal behavior rather than about your actual behavior.13 For example, instead of asking, "Did I give you enough time to make the changes to that document I assigned you?" say, "When it comes to making changes to documents like the one I just assigned you, what's the ideal amount of time for you to get the work done?"

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> How to Be on the Balcony 1. Become Balcony Boy. View the situation from the balcony in preparation for a stressful event and during pauses in the action. This will enable you to focus on the task rather than worrying about how you look. 2. Be a fly on the wall. Replay a negative event while observing yourself from a distance. This will result in reconstruing—or reframing—rather than

> reliving the painful experience, which aids perspective, understanding, acceptance, and your ability to move on. 3. Observe [your name's] behavior. When reviewing your own behavior, think of it as observing a third party. Ask them questions. 4. Watch your game tapes. Become Coach and watch the video to observe your behavior without consideration of your motives or excuses. Review electronic records and replay the activities objectively. Then provide actionable feedback. Summary Going to the balcony or being a fly on the wall automatically prompts us to exit the immersed me-here-and-now perspective and adopt Coach's perspective. By being somewhere else, we become someone else, reducing the dysfunctional effects of ego. From the distanced perspective, when we observe ourselves, it feels like we are looking at someone else. We see ourselves more clearly, with less distortion. We are focused on the task, not on the image. In this distanced state, we are better able to learn from feedback and make better decisions. There's another benefit to viewing ourselves from a distance: We can see the bigger picture.

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> Being on the balcony not only helps us create psychological distance but it enables us to see the big picture.

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> HOW-TO 1: Zoom out. Imagine seeing yourself on the dance floor, or in whatever situation you're in. Except don't focus on you. Don't look at you on the dance floor; look at the dance floor that you happen to be on. You are just part of the scene. The result should be that you see the whole of the situation more clearly. Some of the specific details might be blurred, but you can see the fundamental shapes and how they fit together. You have a sense that you are gaining perspective and seeing the big picture. To illustrate this effect, the next time you are looking at a broad landscape or urban scene, relax your eyes for a moment and allow the details to blur. You'll get a sense of the general colors and major shapes. Individual details ought to disappear.

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> "Thus, when confronting a decision with many pieces of information, people may improve their decision outcome by self-inducing psychological distance."