

LISTENING 8

TASK 1

In today's networked society, information overload risks losing introspection and reflection. The text advocates for working smarter by incorporating periods of doing nothing, emphasizing the importance of unplugging for mental health and creativity in the face of constant busyness and cyber distractions.

TASK 2

1. Networked society risks information overload; introspection lost amid constant connectivity temptation.
2. Working harder ≠ working smarter; periodic slacking off enhances imagination and mental health.
3. "Busyness" defines lives; mobile devices dominate public spaces, impacting mental well-being.
4. Executive challenge: managing 500 daily emails, emphasizing the need for information filter and thinking time.
5. Boredom, often shunned, can trigger imagination and creativity, seen as a liminal, critical resource.
6. Cyber age distractions lead to constant busyness, contracting creativity, and impacting mental health.
7. Imbalance between action and reflection risks psychological burnout, prevalent in contemporary work environments.
8. Workaholic culture contributes to personal and mental health problems; no direct link between hard work and smart work.
9. Doing nothing stimulates unconscious thought, excelling in integrating information, and generating novel ideas for problem-solving.
10. Suggestion: periodic slacking off may be the best approach for maintaining mental health and solving complex problems.

HOW MANY POINTS DID YOU GET?

TAPESCRIPT

In today's networked society we are at risk of becoming victims of information overload.

Introspection and reflection have become lost arts as the temptation to just finish this or find out that is often too great to resist. But working harder is not necessarily working smarter. In fact, slacking off and setting aside regular periods of doing nothing may be the best thing we can do to induce states of mind that nurture our imagination and improve our mental health. Our lives have become defined by busyness. Look around you at the train station. In cafes out on the street people are glued to their mobile handset or tablet. I recently asked an executive, I once coached how many emails she received a day, 500 she told me. But I don't read any of them. If I did I wouldn't be doing my job. The challenge she said wasn't obtaining information but pushing it away so I don't suffer from information overload. I need time to think. You can't do creative work at a cyber pace. If we don't allow ourselves periods of uninterrupted freely associated thought then personal growth, insight and creativity are less likely to emerge.

Doing nothing and boredom are closely intertwined. While most of us find it hard to tolerate in many instances boredom can be a prelude to something. It can trigger our imagination and creativity. In the sense boredom can be seen as a liminal space, a critical resource that pushes us to seek the unfamiliar. But in the cyber age where we have an almost unlimited selection of entertainment and distraction to hand it's easier to find ourselves in a state of constant busyness than it is to do nothing. Our frenetic activities in cyberspace contracts creativity and can impact on mental health. If we don't know how to calibrate the balance between action and reflection we may become a casualty of psychological burnout. Unfortunately in contemporary organisations work addicts are highly encouraged, supported and even rewarded. But there isn't necessarily a relationship between working hard and working smart. In fact to work a holic environment make contribute to serious personal and mental health problems including low morale, depression, substance abuse, workplace harassment, relationship breakdown and above average absenteeism. The most effective executives are those who can both act and reflect which means unplugging themselves from the compulsion to keep busy.

Doing nothing or having nothing to do are valuable opportunities for stimulating unconscious thought processes, unconscious thought excels at integrating and associating information.

By subconsciously carrying out associative searches across our broad database of knowledge in this region of the mind we are less constrained by confencial associations and more likely to generate novel ideas than when we consciously focus on problem solving.

The outcome of these processes might not always enter our consciousness immediately. They may need time to incubate. The suggestion here is that as well as being the best thing for our mental health, doing nothing or slacking off may turn out to be the best way to resolve complex issues.