

# HOW SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE THINK

Application Guide

*John C. Maxwell*

# Unleash the Potential of Focused Thinking

Coach John Wooden, one of the greatest basketball coaches in the history of the sport, was a big believer in focus. When gathering his teams for practice, he would remind them that practice was an “all-in” moment.

Coach Wooden understood the power of focusing mental and physical energy on what’s important. Practice was just as important as any game because practice made success in a game possible.

After he retired, he wrote, “[Success] begins by trying to make each day count and knowing you can never make up for a lost day. If a player appeared to be taking it easy in practice, I told him, ‘Don’t think you can make up for it by working twice as hard tomorrow. If you have it within your power to work twice as hard, why aren’t you doing it now?’”

In this lesson, John talks about his keys to focused thinking and how he applies that focus to his daily schedule. In a day full of opportunities, John knows that some are more important than others, and those are the moments where he turns his focus. Those are the opportunities where he’s “all-in” and giving 100 percent.

**The application exercise for this lesson is to look at your schedule for the next three days and figure out the most important opportunity for each day.**

It could be a meeting, dinner date, or ballet recital, or it could be something entirely different, but spend time looking ahead and figuring out where you need to be “all-in” for each of the next three days. Then set yourself up to give 100 percent at those times.

That may mean adjusting other parts of your schedule to ensure you’re properly rested or can arrive on time and unhurried. It may mean turning off your internet access, so you aren’t easily distracted while working on a project. Maybe it means you leave your phone in your office or bag so you can be fully present in the moment.

It doesn’t take much for us to justify not giving our all, especially in a world that has become accustomed to endless “urgent” distractions that require our “immediate” attention. When everyone is distracted, excusing a lack of focus becomes an act of self-preservation.

But excuses don’t lead to success.

Figuring out what’s important is one thing, but staying focused on what’s important is a different way of thinking. Being a focused thinker will provide you the competitive edge you need to not only get more done, but to get more of the right things done.

In a world focused on “urgent” but unimportant things, the person who can focus on what truly matters—and give it their all—is the person who succeeds.