

## Focusing with Mental Models

Have you ever gone to work and things did not go as you expected? Maybe it was a patient interaction, a meeting, or an interaction with a coworker. The result usually is a struggle to determine how to proceed or losing focus of your outcomes. Should I change directions? Should I stick to my original plan? In many cases people don't know because they didn't have a plan in the beginning.

A mental model is an explanation of someone's thought process about how something works in the real world. It is a representation of the surrounding world, the relationships between its various parts and a person's intuitive perception about his or her own acts and their consequences.\*

The best way to determine where to prioritize your day, be it at work or at home is to develop the practice of Mental Models. Prior to your day, meeting, or interaction, you will tell yourself a story of what you expect to occur in your situation. And you will think of this story as the situation is occurring. As a result of this practice, your brain will automatically know where to focus.

### Try This!

- Tell a story about your interaction with as much detail as you can. **Tell the story from the perspective of how you want the day/meeting/interaction to unfold.**
  - What reactions do you expect, what kind of resistance will you encounter, is there someone who always triggers you, what does that look like?
- Because you have anticipated what this day/meeting/interaction should look like, you are more mentally prepared. You have a mental model that you can follow to help guide you to the outcome you want.
  - If something interrupts your mental model, you will more objectively determine if you want to put the distraction aside or pay more attention to it before you react. In turn bolstering your self-awareness.

\*[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mental\\_model](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mental_model)