Carving Out Time To Think

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Do you take the time to step back and reflect more broadly on what you are trying to accomplish, and whether you are making progress? If so, my guess is that you are in a fast-vanishing minority. Most of us are caught up in reacting, meeting, emailing, and talking. We are doing things, in other words, and that is good. But it also is important to step back occasionally and think strategically about what you are doing and how you are doing it. Rushing headlong through our days is how we get things done, but it doesn't necessarily promote thinking about new and different things that might advance our goals.

[Stephen Covey]() identifies sharpening the saw as one of [The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People](), and he tells the story of a person who encounters a man who has been working feverishly for five hours to saw down a tree. The person suggests that the man take a break and sharpen the saw so that his work will go faster. "I don't have time to sharpen the saw," the man says emphatically, "I'm too busy sawing." Sound familiar? Covey categorizes sharpening the saw, which includes finding time to think, as one of those activities that is important, but not urgent. The result is that we never, or rarely, get around to it.

How do you find the time? That is the key question whether you are thinking holistically about personal renewal like Covey, or whether you just want to sit quietly for a few minutes and reflect on your work. A short piece called [“Working Better: How to Carve Out Time to Think”]() from the website [GOOD]() contains four practical ideas for capturing that all-important and elusive commodity—time.

The ideas are straightforward and you already may be doing some of them. Great. If folks are doing other things to capture this kind of time, please post a comment and share your strategies with everyone.