

# Think While Doing

I recently listened to a fine episode of the Working Man podcast in which the interview made the good point that the trades are beneficial to help young men stop living so much in their imagination. They're tactile, and they require presence.

His observation bore itself out for me today, as I spent much too much time scrolling through Twitter rather than starting my day productively. I felt depressed – and it wasn't so much from thoughts of the ridiculous and tragic things happening in the wider society – but more from a feeling of listlessness about my own life.

Here's what I gather from my experiences with moments like this:

If you are only thinking about your future, you will feel despair. You will continue to project out your current mode of behavior (in my case, sitting on Twitter) into the future and see what a bleak place it is. Thinking about how bad the world is, too, – while sitting on your butt – will only make you more depressed about the future of the world.

Thinking about the future – even some daydreaming – is fine and natural, but do it while you're doing something to move forward into the future. This is the only way to keep imagination – which can tend toward darkness and anxiety or grandiosity – in check.

Daydreaming is not ideal during action, but it's a lot better than being an idle daydreamer. You can think about your athletic future when you're on your next run, or your next building project while you're making the saw cuts. You can think about your move while you work to save money for it.

Your thoughts will find new channels – optimistic channels – in the work you are doing in that moment. They will take assurance from your actions. And your mind may still play tricks on you, but it will at least extrapolate out your better behavior rather than your stagnation.

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