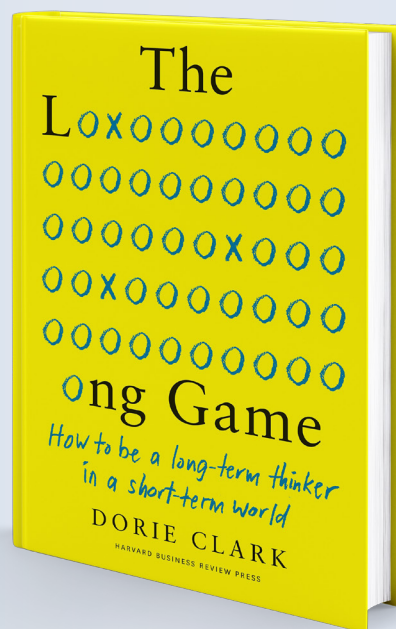


BOOK SNAPS™

Zooming In On Your Next Read



The Long Game

How to Be a Long-Term Thinker
in a Short-Term World

By Dorie Clark

Dorie Clark is a consultant and keynote speaker who teaches executive education at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business and Columbia University's Graduate School of Business. She is the author of *Entrepreneurial You*, *Reinventing You*, and *Stand Out*. The New York Times has described Clark as an "expert at self-reinvention and helping others make changes in their lives." Her books have been translated into eleven languages. Learn more and download your free self-assessment at dorieclark.com.

Long-Term Strategy Gets Personal

Today's professionals live in a state of constantly being pushed to their limits. These limits are often exasperated by the urgent need for tasks to be completed, the overwhelming feelings associated with handling things themselves, and constantly feeling two steps behind. To combat this stress, they keep their head down, push forward, only focused on the next task at hand – never taking a moment to breathe for themselves. This is an endless cycle, one that takes a toll on both personal and professional goals.

Instead of only looking at the task at hand, Dorie Clark uses her book *The Long Game: How to be a Long-Term Thinker in a Short-Term World* to share her unique experiences and crates the framework necessary for professionals to take a long-term approach to their professional game instead of only looking at the tasks at hand. There are only 24 hours in everyone's day, by using the right strategies Dorie Clark explains how professionals can leverage their time more efficiently and in more powerful ways – utilizing a long-term approach to achieving goals instead of the stressful short-term approach.

White Space

If you are a professional, you are all too familiar with the concept of being busy. The question is – why are you busy? Dorie Clark explains it like t, "You can't pour more liquid into a glass that's already full." We don't plan our time accordingly, and lack the white space needed in our lives to balance out the stress. So many of us keep packed schedules, but the truth about these schedules is that they keep us trapped by designs of our own, living life in autopilot going from one task and objective to another.

Dorie uses her own life experiences to explain how having a busy life and being numb to everything around us, replacing it with our workload can be normal. From going through a breakup, a death in the family, selling her home, and moving to another state, she still delivered sixty-one keynote talks during that year – mainly because the only time she didn't cry was when she was away from home, so she stayed busy. She uses several other scenarios to help explain how being busy can be the "drug" that replaces something else in our lives.

There is a reckoning that comes – one way or another. You can spot inefficiencies, which spark these big-picture questions:

Should you be doing this task yourself?

Can you delegate it to someone else, or just stop doing it altogether?

Where should you focus your efforts to get the biggest return?

If today were a new day, would you invest in that project?

By answering these questions, you can begin to set a pattern in your schedule that includes limits and true priorities within it. Instead of letting your work expand and fill all of your time, set boundaries around it. Sometimes this requires learning to say “no,” even to the things you really want to do. We oftentimes say “yes” because we don’t want to disappoint others, we are worried about being judged negatively, we want to avoid the hard conversations, we want to feel important and needed, and we are plagued by FOMO (the fear of missing out). Dorie explains that there comes a time when we have to let go of these unrealistic expectations of pleasing others and instead think more about ourselves. If it doesn’t rank a nine or ten on the excitement scale for you, then it should automatically fall into the “no” category. Although this doesn’t always jive in daily operations, we can begin looking at how we divide out our personal time.

One thing that most professionals are familiar with is the idea of using checklists – something you may use on a daily basis in your role to ensure a job is done correctly. What if you applied the same principles to your life? There are four questions that Dorie uses with her executive coaching clients to help them thing through requests, opportunities, and obligations:

What is the total commitment?

What is the opportunity cost?

What is the physical and emotional cost?

Would you feel bad in a year if you didn’t do this?

The important point that Dorie is stressing in this first section is figuring out how to delegate your time to what matters most. While we may be rushed with deadlines or important tasks, our “white space” time is still extremely important – we just have to make sure we are turning down what doesn’t excite us to make space for what does. The long-term impact of our decisions should be factored into this, not just our what it provides for us in the short-term.

Focus Where It Counts

Your time is important, and now you have some extra sitting around. How do you decide what to do with it to maximize your long-term goals (which may not always be obvious)? Dorie focuses on providing the right recipe for focusing your time where it counts – setting the right goals, exploring, thinking in waves, strategic leveraging, and finding the right people within the right rooms. The goal is to optimize your time to overlook the short-

term outcomes and focus more on the long-term outcomes.

Dorie talks about Google’s statement when they went public in 2004 – “We encourage our employees, in addition to their regular projects, to spend 20% of the time working on what they think will most benefit Google. This empowers them to be ore creative and innovative. Many of our significant advances have happened in this manner.” -Sergey Brin and Larry Page. The Google 20% concept was originally created by 3M, which allows 15% time to be innovative. Dorie finds the idea of cordon-ing off time for innovation as a way to explore and see where your passion takes you but finding this time can be tricky. She points out that Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer made the comment that it requires 120% time to add in that additional innovation – something most professionals really don’t have the time to do. You have to fight to be able to carve out an additional 20% of your time to do anything extra around your obligations.

The best way to really carve out your time is by thinking in waves. You have to alternate between modes in order to maximize what you get done. Dorie uses a Career Wave model that explains sequencing between:

- Learning
- Creating
- Connecting
- Reaping

This leads into her questions for achieving an optimal leverag-ing strategy:

What should you spend your time doing?

What are the 20% of your activities that will yield 80% of the results?

What can you stop doing?

How can you use constraints to your advantage?

What are your hypotheses about the future and how do they inform my actions today?

How can you do something once and make it count ten times?

Where, and how, do you want to live?

What would it look like t stand up for your vision?

How can you combine work and your personal life to make both more enjoyable?

What forms of currency, connections, etc. do you have to leverage?

You can use these to start thinking about the different types of networking opportunities you engage in – long-term, infinite, or short-term. Where will your connections get you and what can they do for you – in the long run? You have to consider the vari-ous impacts that these opportunities play within your life before committing to something that takes more of your time than you are truly willing to commit.



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Keeping the Faith

Thinking about your goals and your long-term approach can be lonely and feel unfulfilling. Dorie explains that it is worth it though, in the end. In the first two sections she lays out the groundwork for creating the white space in your schedule and then allocating that time doing something with your goals in mind and how to achieve them. While they aren't something easily accomplished, they point toward a brighter future.

Dorie uses the story of J.K. Rowling's first Harry Potter novel and its twelve publisher rejections to explain using strategic patience when a plan doesn't work out. There are circumstances that occur that leave us in disbelief – how can it be happening to us? She talks about Anne Sugar who had to bounce back from rejection. As a successful executive coach, she was working for major companies and Harvard Business School's executive programs. She loved writing, and even took her online poetry classes for fun. No matter how much she wrote, she was always hearing about how she wasn't innovative enough – she was upset. To get rid of her sadness and self-doubt she talked to a friend who suffered similar setbacks – only to realize that their path was not the one she wanted to take. She never gave up and was eventually noticed for one of her Harvard Business Review stories – now she is a viral writer on LinkedIn.

As a rule of thumb, when things aren't looking as though they will go in the right direction, Dorie says to push forward and use these questions to stay on track:

Why are you doing this?

How has it worked for others?

What do your trusted advisors say?

These questions help you reconnect with your purpose and your strategy. To be recognized, and as an expert, it takes time. Don't be discouraged by the bumps along the way. There will be failures along the path, but it is what you do with those failures that makes the difference in how you achieve your long-term goals without focusing on short-term accumulation. Her explanation pushes toward using those failures as alternative paths to your goal and adapting the plans that don't work into something fruitful that allow you to leverage your connections.

In the same way that you experience failure, you will experience reward and according to Dorie, you have to reap those rewards. Her example of choice for this scenario is the infamous “marshmallow study” conducted by Walter Mischel at Stanford University's Bing Nursery School in the 1960s. Children were

offered the opportunity to have one sweet treat now or they could wait 15 minutes in the room alone with the treat and receive two. The true value of this came years later when the study was put up against the life outcomes of those children. The ones who waited and showed self-control performed remarkably better on almost every measure.

Dorie explains that becoming a long-term thinker doesn't happen overnight – it's a long-term process that requires a strategy focused on achieving those goals. You have to start small because goals can feel overwhelming. Positive momentum comes by going one step at a time.

The Three Keys to Becoming a Long-Term Thinker

No one said it was easy, Dorie puts this realization at the very beginning of her book. Through the research and real-life stories illustrated throughout, it is possible to create the winning strategy that drives you toward being a long-term thinker instead of focusing on the short-term benefits of any goal.

It takes a great deal of courage to carve your path to success and to be a long-term thinking, three habits must be cultivated:

1. Independence
2. Curiosity
3. Resilience

Conclusion

Dorie Clark voices that everyone has the capacity to hone in on our individual skills, develop new techniques, and overcome the barriers to being better long-term thinkers. By using the strategies she illustrates throughout *The Long Game* and experiences that back it up, she provides the framework to play the long game instead of only focusing on what rewards a short-term solution provides.

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