BREATH AWAKENS · FROM THOUGHT TO FORM

The TED Companion. Eight Talks. One Arc.

Eight short talks that carry the work. Watch each one before its week.

Watch them. In this order. Before you build.

Every link is on the last page.

OVERVIEW · EIGHT TALKS · ONE ARC

Eight Talks. One Arc.

Each talk prepares the thinking one week of From Thought to Form asks of you.

> ***How to use this companion.*** *These are the outside voices that keep the journey grounded in tested human practice, not only in its own frame. One comes first, before the weeks begin, because it is the ground the others stand on. Watch on your own, before the session each belongs to.*

Talk	When	What it prepares
1 · **Carol Dweck** — The Power of Believing That You Can Improve	Before you begin	The growth mindset: the ground every week that follows stands on.
2 · **Simon Sinek** — How Great Leaders Inspire Action	Before Week One	Name why the venture exists before you plan a single thing.
3 · **Robin Dunbar** — Can the Internet Buy You More Friends?	Before Week One	Relationship has a real, finite scale: your Board of five and your Dunbar 150.
4 · **Robert Waldinger** — What Makes a Good Life?	Before Week One	Good relationships make a good life: the ground of the Goal Sharing Exercise.
5 · **Ernesto Sirolli** — Want to Help Someone? Shut Up and Listen!	Before Week Two	Serve the person in front of you; listen before you build.
6 · **Angela Duckworth** — Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance	Before Week Three	The prototype is carried through by grit, not by excitement.
7 · **Amy Cuddy** — Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are	Before Week Four	Settle the body; you communicate more truly from a settled place.
8 · **Chris Voss** — Never Split the Difference	Before Week Four	Label the reality plainly before you propose anything about it.

The Power of Not Yet.

The Power of Believing That You Can Improve · TEDxNorrköping · about 10 minutes ·
www.ted.com/talks/carol_dweck_the_power_of_believing_that_you_can_improve

THE CORE IDEA

Dweck's research contrasts a fixed mindset, the belief that ability is set, with a growth mindset, the belief that it can be developed. Her emblem is a school that gave the grade "Not Yet" instead of a fail: the words turn a failure into a stage of learning, and the belief itself changes how people meet difficulty.

Applied to the Whole Journey — The Ground

From Thought to Form is itself a spiral of not yet. You do not arrive knowing your why, your people or your form; you grow into each. Hold the whole journey in the growth mindset and nothing that goes wrong can stop you. It only teaches.

Applied to Week One — Naming Your Why

You will not name your why perfectly the first time. Write it anyway, and treat the first version as not yet. Each week will sharpen it. A why that is allowed to grow becomes truer than one you are afraid to revise.

Applied to Week Three — The Prototype

When the prototype stumbles in front of real people, the two words "not yet" keep the work alive. A fixed mindset hears a verdict. A growth mindset hears information, and returns to the work with better questions.

The Practice

Before Week One, write down one thing you believe you cannot do in this venture. Add the word "yet" to the end of the sentence. Read it again at the close of Week Four and notice what has changed.

Start With WHY.

How Great Leaders Inspire Action · TEDxPuget Sound · 18 minutes ·
www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action

THE CORE IDEA

People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it. Sinek's Golden Circle places WHY at the centre, HOW in the middle and WHAT on the outside. Most ventures communicate from the outside in. The ones that build loyal followings communicate from the inside out. The WHY precedes the product.

Applied to Week One — Your WHY

Week One asks you to name your WHY before naming anything else. This is not a values exercise; it is the taproot of the whole plan. Ventures that communicate WHY clearly attract people who believe what they believe, not only customers who want what they offer.

Applied to Week Two — Your Offering

Every offering you build must be traceable back to your WHY. If you cannot draw a direct line from your WHY to the offering you shape in Week Two, the offering is built from the outside in. It may produce revenue, but not coherence.

Applied to Week Four — Speaking Your Work

The most common failure in communication is leading with WHAT before WHY. Every post, pitch or client conversation that begins with "here is what I offer" before why it exists is working against the listener's natural way of deciding.

The Question

Before watching this talk, write one sentence about why your venture exists. After watching it, write the same sentence again. If the second version is more specific and more honest than the first, the talk has done its work.

The Science of Your Sphere.

Can the Internet Buy You More Friends? · TEDxObserver · about 15 minutes · www.youtube.com/watch?v=07IpED729k8

THE CORE IDEA

Dunbar's research suggests the human brain can keep stable relationships with roughly 150 people, in layers of about 5, 15, 50 and 150. His argument is that the internet has not changed this: it makes the outer rings more visible, while the inner rings remain the ones that hold real trust.

Applied to Week One — Your Board of Five

The innermost layer holds about five people. These are the people you ask to sit on your Board of five: the few who know you well enough to tell you the truth about the work and to hold you to it.

Applied to Week One — Your Dunbar 150

Mapping your 150 is not a networking strategy. It is a human reality applied with care. Your first clients will most likely come from people you already know, not from reach. A platform amplifies the sphere; it does not replace it.

Applied to Week Four — Where to Speak First

When time is limited, as it always is, speak to the inner rings first. One personal conversation with someone in your closest fifteen can do more for a new venture than ten posts reaching strangers.

The Practice

Before you spend a single hour on social media content, spend time mapping your Dunbar 150. Every name, every layer. The mapping itself is one of the most valuable things a new venture can do, and it costs nothing but time and honesty.

What Makes a Good Life.

What Makes a Good Life? Lessons from the Longest Study on Happiness · TEDxBeaconStreet · about 13 minutes ·
www.ted.com/talks/robert_waldinger_what_makes_a_good_life_lessons_from_the_longest_study_on_happiness

THE CORE IDEA

The Harvard Study of Adult Development has followed the same group of men, and later their families, since 1938. Its clearest lesson, Waldinger says, is that good relationships keep us happier and healthier, more than money or fame; and that loneliness does real harm.

Applied to Week One — The Goal Sharing Exercise

This talk is the ground the Goal Sharing Exercise grew from: a good life, turned into goals you can live toward. Its three categories reach for what the study found matters most, good relationships and real contribution.

Applied to Week One — Your Sphere

The people in your Board of five and your Dunbar 150 are not only a market. They are the life the venture is meant to serve. A plan that grows the business while thinning those relationships has misread its own why.

Applied to Week Three — Building Without Burning Out

Carrying a prototype through takes long hours. Keep time for the people who matter. The study suggests that the quality of those relationships will shape your life more than the success of any single launch.

The Question

After watching, ask: if this venture succeeds exactly as planned, who will be in my life in ten years? Then write your goals so that they include those people, as a life you actually want to live.

TALK 5 · ERNESTO SIROLLI · BEFORE WEEK TWO · ACCEPT · SERVE THE PERSON

Want to Help Someone? Shut Up and Listen.

Want to Help Someone? Shut Up and Listen! · TEDxEQChCh · 17 minutes ·
www.ted.com/talks/ernesto_sirolli_want_to_help_someone_shut_up_and_listen

THE CORE IDEA

Sirolli's early aid projects failed because he arrived with solutions before understanding the problem from the people living it. When he stopped presenting and started listening, without agenda, the work began to succeed. Passion, skill and a real market must all be present, and finding them takes listening.

Applied to Week Two — Building the Offering

Before you design what you will offer, you must be able to describe the problem from the participant's point of view, in their language, not yours. If you have not sat with someone who has this problem and listened without offering a solution, you are building on assumption.

Applied to Week Two — For Whom

Knowing who your offering is not for matters as much as knowing who it is for. The clearer you are about that boundary, the more credible your yes becomes, and the better you serve the people inside it.

Applied to Week Four — Client Conversations

The most common error in a sales conversation is presenting the offering before the other person has finished describing their situation. Ask one question. Then be silent. Present nothing until you can summarise what they told you, in their words.

The Question

Name the last time you sat with someone who has the problem your venture addresses and listened without offering a solution. If you cannot name a specific conversation, that is the first thing to do before Week Two.

Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance.

Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance · TED Talks Education · 6 minutes · www.ted.com/talks/angela_lee_duckworth_grit_the_power_of_passion_and_perseverance

THE CORE IDEA

Duckworth studied cadets, spelling-bee contestants, teachers and salespeople, and found one quality that kept appearing among those who succeeded: grit, passion for a long-term goal and the perseverance to pursue it through failure. She links it directly to Dweck's growth mindset.

Applied to Week Three — The Prototype

Every prototype fails in some specific way. The builder who treats that failure as information rather than defeat, and returns to the work with curiosity, is the one who eventually makes something that works. Grit is what makes prototyping possible.

Applied to the Weeks After — The Long Middle

Whatever plan you leave the four weeks with, the second month will be harder than the first, and the third harder than the second. That is the nature of building anything real. The builders who finish are rarely the most talented; they are the ones who return.

Applied to Week Four — Speaking Consistently

Consistent communication, a little every day for ninety days, is a grit practice. The results seldom come in the first thirty days. The builder who stops at Day 28 because it is not working has not yet seen what Day 90 brings.

The Question

Name the last time you returned to something after it failed. Not metaphorically: specifically. What did you attempt that did not work, and what did you do next? That pattern is your current relationship with grit. The prototype will show you how it has grown.

Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are.

Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are · TEDGlobal 2012 · 21 minutes ·
www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_may_shape_who_you_are

THE CORE IDEA

Cuddy argues that how we hold our bodies shapes how we feel, not only how others see us. Later research supports the first part, that open, expansive postures can help people feel more confident, though the hormone changes reported in the original study did not hold up. The lesson is simple: settle the body before you speak.

Applied to Week Four — Before Every Significant Conversation

Before a pricing conversation, a pitch, a difficult meeting or a piece of content you feel unsure about, check your physical state. Are you contracted or open? A few minutes of settling the body before you speak can change how you feel as you say it.

Applied to Week Two — Naming Your Price

The moment of stating your price is where most builders contract. They soften it, qualify the offering and apologise for asking. Prepare your body before that conversation, and let the price be said plainly.

Applied to Week Three — Delivering the Prototype

Delivering a prototype to real people for the first time is a high-stakes moment. A facilitator's tension is felt in the room before it is heard in the words. Arrive settled, and the room can settle with you.

The Practice

Before every session, every client conversation and every piece of content: two minutes. Stand. Open the body. Breathe the 4-4-4-4 Breath Anchor. This is not motivation. It is preparation.

Tactical Empathy.

Never Split the Difference · TEDxUniversityofNevada · 12 minutes ·
www.ted.com/talks/chris_voss_never_split_the_difference

THE CORE IDEA

Voss was the FBI's lead international kidnapping negotiator. His core principle is tactical empathy: before presenting any position, accurately name what the other person is experiencing, not what you want them to feel. This lowers defensiveness and creates the conditions for genuine agreement.

Applied to Week Four — Pricing Conversations

When someone hesitates at your price, the instinct is to justify, discount or explain. Instead, label what they are experiencing: "It sounds like this is a significant investment to consider." Pause. Their answer will tell you what is really in the way, and it is rarely the price.

Applied to Week Two — Describing the Offering

The most persuasive offering description begins by naming the person's current situation before describing the offering: "If you have tried other programmes and found them either too conceptual or not deep enough, this may be for you." That does more than any feature list.

Applied to Week Three — Prototype Feedback

When gathering feedback, do not ask "What did you think?", which invites politeness. Ask calibrated questions: "What was most confusing?" "What would have made this more useful?" They produce specific, usable answers.

The Practice

In your next significant conversation, whether about price, partnership or a new client, do not present your position until you have accurately summarised theirs. Begin with "It sounds like..." and notice what changes.

THE RECOMMENDED WATCH ORDER · BEFORE EACH WEEK

Watch in This Order.

Each talk prepares the specific thinking the corresponding week requires.

THE SEQUENCE IS INTENTIONAL

Dweck first, because the growth mindset is the ground the others stand on. Sinek, Dunbar and Waldinger before Week One: why, sphere and a good life, before anything is planned. Sirolli before Week Two. Duckworth before Week Three. Cuddy and Voss before Week Four.

When	Talk	Note
Before You Begin	Carol Dweck — The Power of Believing That You Can Improve	*Hold every setback in the weeks ahead as a stage, not a verdict.*
Before Week One · Identify	Simon Sinek — How Great Leaders Inspire Action · Robin Dunbar — Can the Internet Buy You More Friends? · Robert Waldinger — What Makes a Good Life?	
Before Week Two · Accept	Ernesto Sirolli — Want to Help Someone? Shut Up and Listen!	*Watch it twice if you can. The offering cannot be designed without it.*
Before Week Three · Embrace	Angela Duckworth — Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance	*Note what you feel when she describes returning after failure. That feeling is the data.*
Before Week Four · Let Go	Amy Cuddy — Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are · Chris Voss — Never Split the Difference	*Watch Cuddy first: settle the body before the strategy.*

WHERE TO WATCH · ALL EIGHT TALKS

Find Every Talk.

Click any link, or type the address into your browser. All eight are free to watch.

	Talk	Venue · length	Address
	Carol Dweck — The Power of Believing That You Can Improve	TEDxNorrköping · about 10 minutes	www.ted.com/talks/carol_dweck_the_power_of_believing_that_you_can_improve
	Simon Sinek — How Great Leaders Inspire Action	TEDxPuget Sound · 18 minutes	www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action
	Robin Dunbar — Can the Internet Buy You More Friends?	TEDxObserver · about 15 minutes	www.youtube.com/watch?v=07IpED729k8
	Robert Waldinger — What Makes a Good Life?	TEDxBeaconStreet · about 13 minutes	www.ted.com/talks/robert_waldinger_what_makes_a_good_life_lessons_from_the_longest_study_on_happiness
	Ernesto Sirolli — Want to Help Someone? Shut Up and Listen!	TEDxEQChCh · 17 minutes	www.ted.com/talks/ernesto_sirolli_want_to_help_someone_shut_up_and_listen
	Angela Duckworth — Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance	TED Talks Education · 6 minutes	www.ted.com/talks/angela_lee_duckworth_grit_the_power_of_passion_and_perseverance
	Amy Cuddy — Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are	TEDGlobal 2012 · 21 minutes	www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_may_shape_who_you_are
	Chris Voss — Never Split the Difference	TEDxUniversityofNevada · 12 minutes	www.ted.com/talks/chris_voss_never_split_the_difference