



TRANSCRIPT

Episode #37: A Power Thought to Increase Productivity

You are listening to episode 37 of *Mastering The Power Skills*, and this is one of our occasional mini episodes where I share a power thought with you. Now, if you already follow this podcast, you know that we do plenty of in-depth episodes on the techniques and strategies that will make you more influential and persuasive in your career.

But there are also times when all you really need is a very simple shift in your mindset. You don't need a complete strategy at those times, you just need a fresh way of looking at things so you can feel re-energized and empowered. And that's the goal of these occasional mini episodes, to give you a quick, high-impact thought that you can use whenever it will be helpful to you. So join us in this episode of *Mastering The Power Skills* for a new thought that can empower you and get you back in the game.

How much more could you accomplish if you were 25% or even 50% more influential and persuasive? Welcome to *Mastering The Power Skills*, the podcast that provides you with the tips, strategies, and the inspiration to grow your own power and win support for your ideas. And now here's your host, C-suite leadership coach Kathy Dockry.

Hi, everyone. Are you an action-oriented person? Most high achievers are, and I know I certainly am. We usually start every day and every week by hitting the ground running and we spend our time in forward motion.

A former boss used to call me a race horse. And one of my friends now talks about me spending my days in rocket ship mode. In both cases I first thought ouch when I heard those descriptions. On the other hand, I have to admit both of them can be pretty accurate. And our circumstances certainly seem to call for that level of speed and action because it's a rare leader who doesn't have a lot on his or her plate and not that much time to do it.

And we're surrounded by people in the workplace who keep on asking us to do even more. And sure, many of those requests might be small ones, but they all start adding up over time. So when I get to the stage where I'm juggling a lot and not feeling as productive as I like, I start using several power thoughts that get me refocused and more effective. And today I'm going to share one of them with you.

So here's the thought, create before you act. Create before you act. Now, this is a thought that I borrowed from a talk that Marie Forleo did on time management in general. Her version was create before you consume, but I rephrased it a little for myself and I think my version works a little bit better in the workplace.

So let me tell you why this power thought, create before you act, can be so helpful. Being in action mode or rocket ship mode can feel like you're getting a lot done. But after a while, being in that mode takes on a life of its own. In other words you're being reactive to your circumstances versus making deliberate and intentional choices.

For example, did you ever think to yourself, if I wasn't so busy, I could get to that project that I want to do? Well, your clue is in that sentence. Listen to the phrase "If I wasn't so busy." That's a big signal that you're being controlled by your circumstances versus you controlling them.

You've given up your power, and instead of acknowledging that you've made that choice, you're pointing your finger to outside forces. At some level you're saying to yourself you'd rather be a victim of circumstance than an empowered leader. Whoa.

Now, why on earth would we do that? Why would we choose to be victims of our circumstances? Well, I can only guess about others, but for me there are generally two reasons why I find myself in that position.

One of those reasons is that I'm an addict. I'm addicted to speed. It can feel good to be in action mode. There's something addictive about racing around and knocking things off your to-do list. And other people even compliment you for doing that. So that's a nice boost to our egos, right?

But the other reason why we might prefer to be victims of our circumstances is more insidious. Yes, we may be wringing our hands about how busy we are and wishing we could get to some of the more important projects on our to-do list, but you know what feels even more uncomfortable? Empowering ourselves to make the tough choices that will allow us to control our schedule.

Now, don't get me wrong, I completely understand that there are many aspects of work life that legitimately feel outside of our control. But it's really interesting how we use that fact to rationalize our busyness versus looking at it from a healthy problem solving point of view.

We high achievers are very good at solving problems, right? We just need to get better at making the tough, but ultimately productive choices, versus

taking the easy way out, which is to get swept away by the endless demands on our time. And they are endless, of course.

And that is why I love the power thought, create before you act, so much. When I take the time to say that thought at the beginning of my work day or the beginning of the week, guess what happens? I get creative about my schedule. I pause and I get perspective on the day or the week ahead. I think about what use of my time will create the highest value, either at work or in my personal life.

I think about what are my highest priorities and why. I think about the hard trade-offs I may need to make. For example, the hard conversations I may need to have where I have to say no or renegotiate a commitment. Those hard trade-offs that make it possible for me to do the things that are of the highest value or that are of the highest priority to me.

It's interesting to see that often those things that are of the most value are themselves creative in nature. An important presentation that I've been dragging my feet on for when I "have more time." Or a difficult conversation that I've been avoiding because I haven't yet thought through what I need to say, and how I need to say it, things like that.

But when I remind myself to create before I act, I begin to see how I use rocket ship mode to avoid uncomfortable feelings. And I also begin to see how doing the things that create those feelings is, in fact, a great way of dialing those feelings down. And I instead begin to feel the energy and the exhilaration that comes from aligning my priorities with my actions.

Now, do I always get that balance right? Of course not. While there are many good tactics to achieving productivity, at the end of the day productivity is as much an art as it is a science. It's like a dance that we get better and better at. But repeating the power thought create before you act reminds me to practice the steps of that dance. And step by step I do become more focused, more agile, and more productive.

Okay, my friends, there's another power thought to put in your collection, create before you act. Start trying it out yourself or you can tweak it to get the words right for you. And in the meantime, I hope you have an awesome week ahead and I'll see you in our next episode.

Hey there, would you like some personal guidance about how to use the power skills of influence, persuasion, or presence in a particular situation in your workplace? Well, if so, we've got your back. Just send us a note explaining your situation to powerskills@significagroup.com. We'll drop that email address in the show notes. We'll feature your inquiry in an upcoming episode, keeping your identity anonymous, of course, and make

sure you have some tips and strategies to help you navigate your particular situation skillfully.

Thanks for listening to this episode of *Mastering The Power Skills*. If you like what was offered in today's show and want more insights and resources from Kathy, check us out at www.significagroup.com.