Twitter Thread by George Mack

George Mack
@george__mack

Flying is accidentally the best ever environment for DEEP work and reflection.

Writers like @rickygervais do their best work on airplanes.

Here's 6 reasons why.

THREAD...

What looks like a bug - can often be a feature.

“A change of perspective is worth 80 IQ points.”

The restrictions we face on airplanes is what makes the experience so liberating.

AIRPLANE FEATURE 1 - HIGH EXIT COSTS

You can't find any escapes.

If you try to escape, you face death.

Negative incentives are built into the system.

"Incentives are a super power." - Charlie Munger

AIRPLANE ADVANTAGE 2 - NO INPUTS

There's no newsfeeds to refresh. No emails to reply to.

It's like knowing your heroin dealer is in a coma.

Boredom is built into the system.

Your monkey mind can't access dopamine - so it starts creating its own.

It is a distraction-free environment:

1. No socialising - You don't know anyone. No small talk.

2. No sound inputs - The engine acts as white noise.

3. No visual inputs - The seating structure means you see barely anybody.

AIRPLANE ADVANTAGE 3 - BARBELL EFFECT

If you're flying, you're on your way to an experience. (Flying to)

Or you have just had one. (Flying back)

Meaning your mind is racing with ideas.

There's a built-in barbell effect of ZERO stimulation right next to INTENSE stimulation.

Most of our days are spent in environments that have no barbell.

There's never 0% stimulation. And here's never 100% intense stimulation.

We are at a constant 50%.

There's no intensity. And there's no reflection.

Over time, life feels num

AIRPLANE ADVANTAGE 4 - NO NUTRITION THOUGHTS

You know every few hours someone will come round and offer you food.

Your mind doesn't have to make food plans.

And the awful food is a feature rather than a bug - you eat less and keep a clear head.

AIRPLANE ADVANTAGE 5 - UPRIGHT POSTURE

The awful seating on planes forces you to stay upright

Meditation 101 - It's easier to calm your mind when you have an upright posture

And if you try and decline your seat by 10% - there's negative social incentives built into the system

AIRPLANE ADVANTAGE 6 - AWFUL ENTERTAINMENT CHOICES

There are no algorithms powered by years of viewing data that knows what exact content to distract you with.

It's awful Hollywood flops and TV series.

Another feature that people think is a bug - it's easy to not watch em.

The ideal deep work environment should look and feel like an airplane:

1. High exit costs
2. Minimal external inputs
3. Opposite experience before/after to look forward to / reflect on
4. Nutrition taken care of
5. No access to distraction driven algorithms
6. Upright posture

I wrote this essay 35,000 feet in the air on an 8 hour flight.

If you enjoyed it - you might enjoy my occasional newsletter where I break down mental models + ideas I'm thinking about ■

https://t.co/gZLFoqxVV0

PS. Mental Models 104 Podcast is now live with Modern Wisdom (@ChrisWillx)

Youtube ■ https://t.co/PP61qWg50y

Apple ■ - https://t.co/6LFeTHHwjG