



FOREWORD

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Over the last two decades, we've made remarkable progress in understanding the human brain. We know how stress affects cognition, how chronic overload reshapes the nervous system, and how our inner dialogue can either fuel growth or quietly wear us down.

What's becoming clear in today's work life is this: It's not only the workload that drains us, but how our brain reacts to it. Unless we are able to start understanding our brain and learn to work with it, we keep burning important energy we need elsewhere.

That's where this book comes in.

For years, I've helped leaders and organizations work in more brain-friendly ways, mainly through Google's Search Inside Yourself program, which I co-designed with Chade-Meng Tan and Marc Lesser. The research I've done with my team has already changed how many people approach performance, leadership, and well-being at work.

But as you'll discover in this book, there's a crucial—and often overlooked—piece of the sustainable work puzzle that's grown increasingly significant as the world has become more complex and uncertain:

Maladaptive thinking patterns

Neuroscience shows that internal chatter is one of the brain's most energy-intensive states. When thought loops spin unchecked, pressure rises, and mental noise intensifies, draining the very capacity we need to lead, think, and perform. Over time, this leaves us exhausted, even when, technically, we've had time to rest.

This is why mental clarity is an important frontier of sustainable leadership and workplaces.

The ability to notice when the brain is drifting into protection mode...
The ability to step back from thoughts instead of getting hooked by them...
The ability to lead from values, not from internal chaos...

These are no longer nice-to-have skills. They are essential for navigating complexity, uncertainty, and emotional intensity in modern work life.

I'm thrilled to have helped bring this book to life, creating a practical, science-backed roadmap for leaders and teams. This isn't abstract theory or another wellness trend in disguise. It's a grounded, flexible, and deeply human framework for navigating the realities of work and for building cultures where clarity, focus, and well-being can truly thrive. It is based on a science with more than 1400 randomized clinical research trials.

And as someone who has spent the last 20 years researching the intersection of attention, emotion regulation, and the human brain, I can say this with confidence: It's about time we brought this focus into the workplace.

Read it slowly. Reflect on it deeply. Practice it on yourself and with your team.

Because when we learn to relate differently to mental noise, we regain access to what matters most: ourselves.

Philippe

*“Understanding the brain has completely transformed
how I approach life and work”*

– Trine Grönlund