

# Bruce Lee: Balance thinking and doing



Bruce Lee died in 1973 at age 32. In his short life, he thrived as an action film star, martial artist, screenwriter, movie director and philosopher.

To operate at peak efficiency, Lee liked to “hack away at the unessential.” He spent his time on what mattered most and addressed each task with simplicity and ease of effort.

To keep things simple, he pruned away extraneous factors so that he could focus on just what he needed—and nothing more. He advised friends to absorb what they found useful and discard the rest.

For Lee, mastering martial arts meant paying attention to others’ behavior. If you became too focused on yourself—and failed to observe what others were doing—you could be beaten.

Applying that theme to everyday life, Lee boosted his productivity through keen observation. When he spoke, he watched how others responded in terms of both verbal and nonverbal cues.

“To know oneself is to study oneself in action with another person,” he said.

Lee also liked to balance “thinking time” with “doing time.” He reserved time for reflective thought that would trigger what he called “a flash of understanding.” This insight would propel him into action.

Balancing thought and action kept him moving forward. He knew that too much analysis could undermine his productivity.

“If you spend too much time thinking about a thing, you’ll never get it done,” he said.

— Adapted from “[Bruce Lee’s Best Productivity Tricks](#),” Thorin Klosowski.