

How do I manage to do live synthesis in workshops and stakeholder conversations?

In short: I trained that skill for years. I always ended meetings by saying: here are the three most important things from this session. This forced me to do synthesis live on the spot and trained that skill



There are skills that don't depend on long theories that you need to understand but on practice. Being able to quickly capture the most important parts of a conversation and filter the unnecessary details is something that I find you can acquire more easily through repetition. At least, if I look back, that's how I did it.

The secret is simple: repeatedly putting myself in the challenging situation of having to do the synthesis when I don't have it yet. Simply by announcing to people: "so the three points are..." it forces your brain into synthesis mode. You made a promise to others, now no matter what you have to fulfill it.

I often said that sentence at the ends of meetings, and workshops. Even when I had no clue what I would say next. But strangely enough you always get to finish that sentence.

Maybe the first thirty times you do it, it feels very basic and others correct you. They might say: to me another important point is ...

But you'll see that slowly you'll just get better at it without much deep thinking. Just like developing a muscle. It's the repetition of a movement that makes the muscle grow, not how hard you think about it.

Backstage of this article

This article was illustrated and written by hand on a refurbished Remarkable II tablet. The text was then converted into typed text through the connect service of Remarkable. You can download a PDF version of the original note below if you are curious.