

# 7 Mental Models

## That Changed How I Think

by Tashifa Nooreen

Thanks to Meraj Faheem

## 1. Picture Yourself

Sometimes, the best way to solve a problem is to step outside of yourself. Picture someone you admire, someone whose decisions you respect, and ask yourself, “What would they do if they were in my place?”

It could be a mentor, a parent, or even someone you’ve never met but deeply look up to. Shifting your perspective often shifts the solution.

## 2. Compounding

Big changes come from small, consistent actions stacked over time.

Meraj shared how his career kept compounding because he kept showing up and putting in the work. While he was building Edventure Park, that experience later opened the doors for him to become the CEO of TGIC. He wasn’t chasing titles; his consistent efforts naturally created bigger opportunities over time.

Compounding is not just about money. It also applies to skills, knowledge, networks, and experiences that silently grow when you keep putting in the work.

## 3. Delay Gratification

Our brain loves quick dopamine hits, but instant wins rarely lead to lasting growth. If we want to build something meaningful, we have to say no to shortcuts and get comfortable with waiting.

Meraj reminded us that compounding doesn’t happen overnight. It demands patience, depth, and focus. If you’re chasing immediate results, maybe what you’re chasing isn’t that big.

## 4. Regret-Free Living

This one hit me the hardest. The regret of not trying will always weigh heavier than the regret of failing.

Failure leaves you with lessons.

Not trying leaves you with nothing.

Meraj explained it so simply: when you give something your all, even if it doesn’t work, you walk away richer in experience.

## 5. Pick Hard Things 💪

Growth never comes from comfort.

If something scares you, that's exactly where you should lean in. Hard things build resilience, perspective, and problem-solving muscle.

We discussed how doing "hard" things early in life compounds into confidence later. When you've faced enough challenges, future problems don't feel intimidating anymore.

## 6. Power to Do ⚡

Don't give people too much power over you. When others can easily read your thoughts, actions, and emotions, they might unintentionally or intentionally use them against you. Sometimes, you need to **cut your emotional nerve**, detach from unnecessary emotional reactions and focus on clarity. Protect your space, maintain composure, and stay in control of your own narrative. Real strength lies in deciding what to express, what to hold back, and when to act.

## 7. First Principles Thinking 🔍

My absolute favorite from the session.

Meraj called it a way of life. It's about breaking problems down to their core truths and rebuilding from scratch instead of blindly following existing patterns.

Here are the 10 mini mental models inside First Principles:

- **Question everything:** Never accept something just because "that's how it is".
- **Strip it naked:** Remove assumptions until only facts remain.
- **Find the root cause:** Keep asking "why" until you reach the real reason.
- **Constraints create innovation:** Problems exist because of limitations. Solve them.
- **Rebuild from zero:** Sometimes, starting fresh is smarter than fixing.
- **Physics over opinions:** Facts and logic > noise.
- **Invert the problem:** Flip the question and look at the opposite side.
  - **3 AM test:** The thoughts keeping you up at night are usually the ones that matter most.
- **Borrow ideas:** Learn how others solved it and adapt it to your context.
- **Anti-jugaad:** No shortcuts. Quick fixes don't compound.