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Top 10 Lessons From "How to Take Smart Notes" by Sonke Ahrens, One Simple Technique to Boost Writing. Learning and Thinking for Students, Academics and Nonfiction Book Writers.

1. Purpose

- a. Willpower is never as effective as having a meaningful and well defined task.
- b. You may not have willpower, but the fact that you do not have to use it indicates that you have prepared yourself for success.
- c. This is where note taking organization comes into play.

2. Structure

- a. A good structure enables you to do so, to move seamlessly from one task to the next - without jeopardizing the entire arrangement or losing sight of the big picture.
- b. Having a clear structure to work within is not the same as making plans for something.

3. Deal with complex topics

- a. To deal with complexity, keep things as simple as possible and adhere to a few basic principles.
- b. The structure's simplicity allows us to build complexity where we want it: on the content level.

4. Importance of writing

- a. If you want to remember something in the long run, you must write it down.
- b. To truly comprehend something, you must translate it into your own words.
- c. Thinking happens on paper just as much as it does in your head.

5. Ideas

- a. The goal is to develop ideas and arguments rather than to collect them.
- b. Is the new information contradicting, correcting, supporting, or adding to what you already have in your head?
- c. Can you combine concepts to create something new?
- d. What are the questions they raise?

6. Simplicity

- a. We have a tendency to believe that large transformations must begin with a similarly large idea.
- b. However, it is often the simplicity of an idea that makes it so powerful (and often overlooked in the beginning).

7. Brain

- a. Psychologists used to think of the brain as a limited storage that makes learning difficult later in life.
- b. However, we now know that the more connected our existing information is, the easier it is to learn, because new information can dock to that information.

8. Breaks improve your long-term memory

- a. Breaks are much more than just a chance to rest.
- b. They are necessary for learning.
- c. They enable the brain to:
 - i. process information,
 - ii. store it in long-term memory, and
 - iii. prepare it to process new information.

9. Selectivity

- a. While selectivity is essential for smart note-taking, it is also critical to be selective in the right way.
- b. We are naturally drawn to things that we already believe we know, when we should actually seek out contradictory facts that challenge our beliefs.

10. Information network

- a. Connecting a piece of information to many meaningful contexts is useful learning.
- b. Connect your notes with other notes.
- c. Making these connections creates a self-sustaining network of interconnected ideas and facts that act as cues for one another.