

3 on 13

3 things from EP
to make life
better.

APRIL 13 · 2024

Emanuelson-Podas produces the **3on13 Newsletter** on the 13th of every month in the hopes of putting in your hands three things that will help make your life better. Entries may include quotes, reminders, jokes, random recipes, book recommendations, advice, or anything else that might make you think, make you smile, or make you a better, happier human being. **Got something worth sharing? Send it to 3on13@epinc.com**

1 | Monotasking: Embrace the Mono

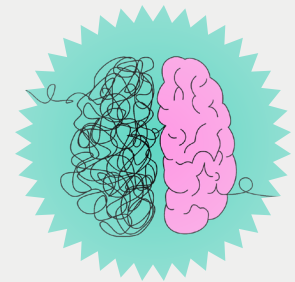
Sad fact: our brains are a mess. They're a beautiful, miraculous mess — capable of extraordinary things — but a mess nonetheless. They fail us daily, in ways large and small.

As a species — especially a species existing in a fast-paced, stimuli-rich world — we don't exactly set our brains up for success. We bombard it with both information and interference, regularly asking it to do things it's just not built to do. (Just ask neuroscientist and [Adam Gazzaley](#), MD, PhD, who lays it all out quite nicely [in this Ted Talk](#)).

Our brains' natural limitations — specifically in attention and working memory — immediately come into play when we try to multitask (or what Dave Crenshaw calls "switch tasking" in his acclaimed book [The Myth of Multitasking](#)). The reality is that the brain is a natural monotasker. Switch tasking comes with a demonstrated "switch cost," most notably in task accuracy and speed, but also in mental fatigue.

Here's the hard part: we are (and our teams are) all in the habit of multitasking. Moving toward monotasking will take practice. Reduce the distractions. Use a [time blocking approach](#) to set dedicated calendar slots for particular work items. Learn how to take small, effective breaks. It can be done.

Interested in learning more about this topic? You'll want to check out [Cal Newport](#) (author of [Deep Work](#)) and [Dr. Gloria Mark](#) (author of [Attention Span: A Groundbreaking Way to Restore Balance, Happiness and Productivity](#)).



2 | To Screen or Not to Screen?

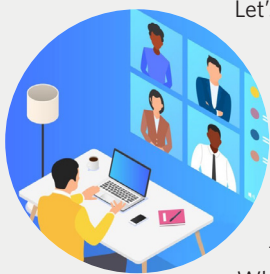
Let's just get this out of the way: virtual meetings are — and should be — here to stay. But... but...

Patrick Lencioni lays out [eight problems with video conferencing](#) that are very real (and most of which you have probably felt at one time or another). This is in no way some sort of anti-technology let's-get-back-to-the-good-ol-days rant; it's a spot-on analysis of why on-screen meetings differ from in-person meetings.

He's quick to acknowledge the place for virtual meetings, but says, "I think we've all become a little complacent about the serious benefits of natural, face-to-face communication."

[Read this](#) not to bash virtual meetings, but rather to remind ourselves of the very real benefits of being together. Then, challenge yourself — and your team — to ask the question:

What kind of meeting is best for the purpose at hand?



3 | Odds and Ends:

- The solar eclipse was cool! [Here are some pix.](#)
- One of our favorite illustrations around the eclipse was created by María Jesús Contreras. See more of her [amazing work here.](#)
- Baseball. Is. Back! Here are [seven glorious minutes of highlights](#) from the opening week.



MARÍA JESÚS CONTRERAS



emanuelson-podas
consulting engineers

952.930.0050 | epinc.com