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How much time of your day is spent in pure thought? One minute? Ten minutes? An hour? Or no time at all? Some people believe that sitting around “thinking” is a waste of time --that it would be better to be “doing” something. In fact, many bosses would not prefer that any of their people be sitting around thinking (thinking is often confused with daydreaming). But those bosses would be completely wrong. Thinking is a vital skill from which any organization could benefit.

Thinking is considered to be an intangible thing--something that no one can touch or see. But in reality, it actually can be seen and felt. How so? Because anything in existence couldn't exist unless it was thought of first. That's right, everything you see, hear, smell, or touch was thought of first.

Thinking sets the foundation for actions, and actions move the world. In fact, everything you achieve or fail to achieve is a direct result of your thoughts. It doesn't matter if someone lays out the red carpet for you, or if the universe sets you up to succeed, you only can succeed if you think it through and take a step to move forward. Your thoughts, regardless how noble they are, create your motivation to get you going in the direction you seek, whether you deserve it or not. Anyone can have an idea, but the idea goes nowhere until a great thinker can bring it to life.

John Kilcullen was one such person who applied great thinking to achieve a great result after overhearing a conversation in a bookstore. He heard a customer ask a clerk, “Do you have any simple books on Microsoft DOS--something like DOS for dummies?” The question was meant to be a joke. But the comment stuck with Kilcullen and he did something about it after giving it some great thought.

In this scenario, some unknown consumer had a good idea, and it went nowhere. In fact, he probably didn't even know his idea was a good idea. But in the hands of a great thinker, that good idea became a reality. Kilcullen launched the product line known as the “Dummies” books. And I'll be honest, I have purchased a few of the them over the years, such as *Plumbing for Dummies*. As a result of some great thinking, there are over 200 million “Dummies” books in print, consisting of more than 2,500 different titles.

If you want to become a great thinker, you first need to become a good thinker. Before becoming a good thinker, you need to become a thinker. In order to become a thinker, you need to be willing to first produce a bunch of mediocre and downright bad ideas. Only by practicing and developing your thinking daily will your ideas get better. Your thinking ability is determined not by your desire to think, but by your past thinking. To become a good thinker, do more thinking. Once the ideas start flowing, they get better. Once they get better, they keep improving.

As you engage in daily thinking, it is important to understand that there are many kinds of thinking. Thinking is not a single skill, it is a collection of skills. It's basically a mental decathlon just like the track-and-field contest where athletes compete in ten events: 100-meter dash, 400-meter dash, long jump, shot put, high jump, 110-meter hurdles, discus throw, pole vault, javelin throw, and 1500-meter run. Thinking is multifaceted.

In a book titled *Thinking for a Change*, John Maxwell reveals eleven different thinking skills that come into play when it comes to good thinking:

1) *Big Picture Thinking*: the ability to think beyond yourself and your world in order to process ideas with a holistic perspective.

2) *Focused Thinking*: the ability to think with clarity on issues by removing distraction and mental clutter from your mind.

3) *Creative Thinking*: the ability to break out of your “box” of limitations and explore ideas and options to experience breakthrough.

4) *Realistic Thinking*: the ability build a solid foundation on facts to think with certainty.

5) *Strategic Thinking*: the ability to implement plans that give direction for today and increase your potential for tomorrow.

6) *Possibility Thinking*: the ability to unleash your enthusiasm and hope to find solutions for even seemingly impossible situations.

7) *Reflective Thinking*: the ability to revisit the past in order to gain a true perspective and think with understanding.

8) *Questioning Popular Thinking*: the ability to reject the limitations of common thinking and accomplish uncommon results.

9) *Shared Thinking*: the ability to include the heads of others to help you think “over your head” and achieve compounding results.

10) *Unselfish Thinking*: the ability to consider others and their journey to think with collaboration.

11) *Bottom-Line Thinking*: the ability to focus on results and maximum return to reap the full potential of your thinking.

It's a real mistake to believe you should stick to one kind of thinking. That's having a very narrow view. It can cause you to value only the kind of thinking in which you excel and to dismiss all other types of thinking. Don't be one of many who falls into this trap. Make an effort to apply the eleven thinking skills at various and appropriate times to lay the foundation of success with any endeavor you encounter. Great thinking leads to great success!

~ The End ~